

# 12 ESSAYS ON BUDDHISM

*[Critical & analytical studies]*

by Ven. DHAMMAVIHARI

---

International Buddhist Research and Information Center (IBRIC) -Sri Lanka  
380/9 Bauddhaloka Mw, Colombo -7, Sri Lanka.  
Tel:+94 1 689388 Fax:+94 1 683016  
2540/1996-06-16

---

## DHAMMA in your COMPUTER

-----

Yes. In the world today, you need it in that form more than ever before. In any religion, their own Dharma fixes the norms of good and righteous living for men and women on earth, not to speak of the children. For it is from here that one takes his or her ascent to heaven or to final liberation.

While there is unity in our ultimate goal of peace beyond all this hectic living, life in the world implies bewildering diversity. Our likes and dislikes, our needs and requirements run through a very wide range. Life of men and women in the world concerns itself, among other things, with production[sometimes even with destruction] of life. They also have to think of healthy rearing of children, even if they have had their origin as test-tube babies. They must also invariably acquire wholesome interpersonal relationships as the every basis of human existence.

With or without the World Bank or the IMF, economic considerations loom large in our minds today. Industries, management of labour and human

resources become part of the very machinery of our living. In the process of our scientific and technological development, we are running contrary to the normal expectations of healthy living. We are unwittingly planning, through the lamentable destruction of our diverse ecosystems, for the elimination of man from earth, long before the judgement day.

In this collection of essays, we focuss attention on many of these issues and try to present to the men and women of today, living in any part of the world, Buddhism's attitude to them. Buddhist teachings are shown to meet these problems face to face. Pick them up one by one and see whether they could help you to put your house in order.

Bhkkhu Dhammavihari

## **Contents**

(1) Aesthetic Enjoyment within the Framework of Buddhist Thinking	3
(2) The Individual and Social Dimension of Salvation in Buddhism	9
(3) Child Care and Growth of Love	24
(4) The Human Resource	32
(5) Buddhism and Beauty	39
(6) Woman within the Religious Frame of Buddhism	46
(7) Poverty, Hunger and Under - Development	65
(8) Society, Crime and the Solace of Religion	75
(9) Sermon for the IL Poya of November 17, 1994	84
(10) To Earn and to Spend	94
(11) Conquest With or Without Conflict	101
(12) Five Planes of After - Death Existence	107

# (1) Aesthetic Enjoyment within the Framework of Buddhist Thinking

## A brief study

Aesthetic sensibility and enjoyment, primarily and essentially, consist of our reactions to our environment. In the philosophy of the Buddha we discover a wealth of information which helps us to plan and adjust our life in the world in a healthy, reasonable and justifiable way. Through this philosophy, we get out of our life in the world the maximum benefit and happiness. We also do not allow ourselves to tread on others' corns or, unwittingly though, burn our own fingers. This, it must be remembered, is a fundamental concept of our *dharma* or the Buddhist norm. It is the rule of *attūpanāyika*, i.e. that one acts and reacts towards others in the same way that one likes to be treated by others [ e.g. *attānaṃ upmaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye*. Dh.p. v.129 ]. It is the recurrent theme of the Ambalaṭṭhikā Rāhulovāda Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya where the Buddha admonishes his son Rāhula that before doing anything through thought, word or deed, one should scrutinise carefully [*paccavekkhitvā paccavekkhitvā kattaḅbaṃ*] whether such action stands to the detriment of oneself [*attavyābādhāya*] or to the detriment of others [*paravyābādhāya*]. In evolving such a sensible and rewarding philosophy of life, the Buddhists do not withdraw into a frozen ice-chamber or plunge into an arid dry desert. Nor do they have to, with an unwarranted idea of the holy, set the spirit to fight against the body and practise severe asceticism..

Therefore this does not necessarily carry with it the renunciation complexion generally associated with the shaven-headed, dyed-robed [not yellow-robed] monk. Nevertheless, it would ultimately lead to the highest achievements of Buddhist religious living which both converge in and are gathered together at the perfect state of ego-lessness required of the recluse, often described as a state of dignified detachment.

The philosophy of the Buddha and the way of life he recommended was in marked contrast to what was prevalent in certain circles in India at the time. In the religious controversies of the time, in the battle of the spirit against the body, the flesh was tortured and human life was degraded to lamentably low depths. These are described in graphic detail in the Mahāsaccaka Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [MN.1. 242-5] where the Bodhisatta, while he was yet experimenting in his search for release, is seen indulging in them. Finally the Bodhisatta rejected them as being of no avail. Once King Pasenadi of Kosala, while he was in the company of the Buddha, spoke of the followers of such creeds in the following words:

"There I see recluses and Brahmins who are emaciated and lean, discoloured and looking exceedingly pale. The veins have become visible all over their bodies. People will indeed not be delighted to see them." [See MN. II.121. Dhammacetiya Sutta].

When these religious men were questioned by the King as to what motivated them into these austere practices, their reply was that it was their religious heritage and that this self-inflicted physical tyranny was part of their religious discipline [ *Bandhuka-rogo no mahārājā ' ti. loc. cit*]. Religious men who indulged in such practices freely roamed the streets of India then as some of them do even today.

In the above description of some of the contemporary Indian ascetics as being repulsive, the original texts use a phrase which means 'do not catch the eye of the onlooker' [*Na viya maññe cakkhuṃ bandhanti janassa dassanāya*]. This means that on seeing them, feelings of pleasure or joy do not arise in the minds of people. We call an object which comes within the range of our vision beautiful, under normal conditions, in relation to the degree of pleasurable feelings it generates within us, i.e. to the degree of pleasurable acceptability we are willing to offer it. In this realm of beauty, namely visual, colour and form are dominant considerations. In defining or judging beauty, whether there are

absolute criteria in relation to colour and form, is a debatable point. They are judged, for the most part, on accepted values, accepted collectively or individually. Through collective persuasion, impersonally though, these values acquire semi-absolute standards. Groups, as much as individuals, would declare things as being beautiful on this basis. If one were to thoroughly simplify this concept of beauty, one could say 'a thing of beauty is joy for ever'. Likewise objects also become capable of giving delight and producing pleasurable feelings through personal association. Such objects then become beautiful, meaningful and significant. Here, memory as well as personal identification and association as well as re-creation and re-association of situations of the past sometimes add to the beauty of an object of the present.

Although this appears to be a totally subjective approach and hence bound to lead to a diversity of notions and standards, one can nevertheless discern at times an objective continuity running through this diversity. In these cases we are looking at the beauty-value of objects from the point of their producing pleasurable feelings in the minds of those who behold them. At the same time, beauty does not need to be always equivalent to what is pretty or good looking, as expressed in common parlance.

Objects which are not pretty on the normally accepted terms are capable of stimulating emotions and giving aesthetic delight because of their special significance to the person concerned. Here, it is not the mere subjective, personal factor. One uses here a different yard-stick, out of the common run of man. In defining beauty and the appeal of beauty, this is what is sometimes called 'the action of the mind.' Even what is weird and grotesque, is capable at times of being beautiful and producing aesthetic delight. The disciples of the Buddha, with their serene sense of detachment, found such places and things particularly inspiring. The Venerable Sāriputta, undoubtedly the foremost of the Buddha's disciples, is found commending in the verses of the Theragāthā, the austerity of the dwelling place of his younger brother, Revata. Thus he says:

In village or the wild, in vale or hill,  
Wherever the men of worth, the arahants  
Their dwelling make, delightful is the spot.  
Delightful are the forests, where no crowd  
Doth come to take its pleasures; there will they  
Who are released from passions find their joy.  
Not seekers they for sense-satiety.

Thag. vv. 991-2

Note here the words 'Not seekers they for sense-satiety' [*na te kāmā-gavesino*]. For evidently, a good part of true beauty would indeed be shut out from those who are mere pleasure seekers. Elsewhere in the Theragāthā, the sylvan retreats which Kassapa the Great describes as soul-delighting, had indeed a beauty which was peculiarly their own.

Those upland glades delightful to the soul,  
Where the Kareri spreads its wildering wreaths,  
Where sound the trumpet-calls of elephant:  
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.  
Those rocky heights with hue of dark blue clouds,  
Where lies enbosomed many a shining tarn  
Of crystal-clear, cool waters and whose slopes  
The 'herds of Indra' cover and bedeck:  
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.

Like serried battlements of blue-black cloud  
Like pinnacles on stately castle built,  
Re-echoing to the cries of jungle folk:  
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.

Thag. vv. 1062-64

Crag where clear waters lie, a rocky world,  
Haunted by black-faced apes and timid deer,  
Carpeted with watery moss and lichen:  
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.

Thag. vv. 1070

In the above verses, expressions like 'where sound the trumpet-calls of elephants,' 'Re-echoing to the cries of jungle folk,' 'Haunted by black-faced apes and timid deer' and 'Carpeted with watery moss and lichen' have a distinctness of their own. It must also be conceded that they reflect the emergence of a particular culture pattern. But the extent to which it found expression and developed later to a fuller richness, depended on the particular genius of the different people into whose midst Buddhism found its way. Buddhists of Japan, particularly those of the early Zen tradition stand unique in this respect.

To give our listeners a sampling of the heights to which Buddhist thinking elevated Japanese poets, let me quote a couple verses written by the great Haiku poet of Japan of the 17th century - Master Basho. Sitting lonely in a solitary hut with only a banana plant nearby as his good neighbour, Basho writes -

A banana plant in the autumn gale -  
I listen to the dripping of rain  
Into a basin at night.

Does this not remind one of the ecstasies of the forest-dwelling monks of the Theragāthā we have discussed in detail above? Here is yet another from Master Basho and his comrade poets.

Above a town

Filled with the odours of things,  
The Summer moon.  
" It's hot ! " "It's hot ! "  
Murmurs are heard in the front yards.

What a beautiful study in contrast of our bustling metropolitan life which we ourselves have created and the potential of inner peace which lies so close with nature in the world outside ! As a man of mature sanctity and deep conviction , a fortnight before his death Basho wrote this haiku.

A white chrysanthemum -  
However intently I gaze,  
Not a speck of dirt.

This attitude also made it possible at times to convert even what was perilous and imminently dangerous into a source of delight and inspiration and to view it with admiration. Here is Thera Tālapuṭa telling us of a phase of life he has been through :

There in the jungle ringing with cries of peacock  
And of heron wilt thou dwell,  
By panthers and by tigers owned as chief.  
And for thy body cast off care;  
Miss not thine hour, thine aim!

Thag. vv. 1113

We run into an even more interesting situation in the story of Ekavihāriya Thera who tells us thus :

Yea, swiftly and alone, bound to my quest,  
I'll to the jungle that I love, the haunt  
Of infuriated elephants, the source and means  
Of thrilling zest to each ascetic soul.



Even an underlying threat to life like the panthers and tigers and the infuriated elephants does not appear to rob the collective ensemble of its inherent beauty. To appreciate fully the reward of this cultivated Buddhist attitude, we should particularly mark the words 'swiftly' and 'alone', 'bound to my quest', 'infuriated elephants' and 'thrilling zest to each ascetic soul'. What is of further interest to us is that the Commentary tells us that this Ekavihāriya Thera is none other than the younger brother Tissa of the Emperor Asoka. We are told that the prince, while hunting, was so impressed at the sight of the Greek Thera Yonaka Mahā Dhammarakkhita seated under a tree, that he also longed to live so in the forest. Longing for the happiness of the recluse, he is said to have uttered the above verses. If we give adequate credence here to the Commentarial tradition, it implies the vibrant continuance of the Buddhist aesthetic values we have discussed above and their survival even after several centuries.

[All translations of the Theragāthā are from Mrs. Rhys Davids' Psalms of the Brethren].

Ven. Prof. Dhammavihari  
Vajiranana Dharmayatanaya  
Maharagama

## **(2) The Individual and Social Dimension of Salvation in Buddhism**

Ven. Professor Dhammavihari

Salvation is defined in the Shorter Oxford Dictionary as the saving of the soul, the deliverance from sin, and admission to eternal bliss, wrought for man by the atonement of Christ. Even after one has made allowance for the essentially Christian ring in these words, the definition will provide a basis to the Buddhist for a broad-based analysis of the concept of salvation in his own religion. As far as the Buddhists are concerned, their own concept of release [*vimutti* or *mokṣa*] in Nirvana which is their equivalent to salvation shares some of the views expressed in this definition.

Let us begin with the idea of the saving of the soul. Conceding the possible controversy between the Christians and the Buddhists over the concept of soul, yet there must necessarily be agreement in the acceptance in both religions of distinctness and identity of persons or individuals, with moral and social responsibilities, as they go through life in the world. Whatever religious or philosophical explanation they offer for the circumstances which man faces in life, pleasant or unpleasant, this experience, in spite of many areas of commonness, also carves out an impress of distinct identity for each individual. Therefore, to the Buddhist as much as to the Christian, in consideration of his own value-system, the liberation of this individual is of supreme importance. The antithesis here, when we speak of liberation may be between human and super-human, mortal and immortal. At the level of everyday experience, it is admitted, all is not well in the world. There has to be a transcendence, a rising above or a getting beyond this state of affairs of the mundane world. The Buddhist looks upon life in the world as not being totally satisfactory. Both areas of life of man, the psycho- and the physical, suffer on account of this deficiency. Some part of it, particularly the physical, like decay, disease and death, is natural and hereditary by virtue of our being caught up in the recurring life process or *samsāra*.

**Psychopathic disturbances**, on the other hand, like greed, hatred and jealousy, **are products of maladjustment and miscalculation by man, through ignorance and deception** [*avidyā* and *moha*]. The totality of this unsatisfactory

nature of life is what is termed in Buddhism as *dukkha* and the Buddhist, in his highest and perfect religious pursuit, seeks salvation therefrom [*na vo dukkhā pamutti attthi* Ud. 51; *dukkhā atthi pamocanaṃ* SN.I.62; *dukkhassa nissaranaṃ paññāyissati* SN.II.10]. From *loka* or *lokiya*, the world or the worldly, he seeks transcendence to the *lokuttara* which shares not of the nature of the world. Whether such transcendence results in a perpetual state of factual existence, to the extent of being real in terms of time and space, or it is only a logical assumption in contrast to what is being rejected, is to be examined in detail elsewhere. At any rate, we may here safely conclude that the Buddhist therefore has no problem in his own religious context in subscribing to the general definition of salvation as 'the saving of the soul', which to him would mean no more and no less than the liberation or emancipation of the individual being from the 'turmoil of the life process' or *samsāra* in which he is caught up.

Coming next to the idea of 'the deliverance from sin,' it has already been indicated that the Buddhist seeks deliverance from the unsatisfactory nature of the world which, more precisely speaking, pertains to the life of man than to the physical world outside. It is man's submission to this conflict which is termed *dukkha*. In fact, the Buddha himself declares that his entire mission consists of clarifying the real nature of this unsatisfactory position of man in the world which is essentially the connotation of the term *dukkha* and of prescribing for the termination of this *dukkha* referred to as *nirodha* [*Pubbe c'āham bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañc'eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ*. MN.I.140]. From the point of view of the Buddhist, man is in this plight of *dukkha* through his own seeking, or rather **because of his non-seeking of a release therefrom**. It is this seeking of what is antithetical to the mundane that liberates the *bodhisatta* [Siddhārtha Gautama] in his attainment of Buddhahood, and elevates him from man to super-man. Subject to birth, disease and death, he seeks release from them. In the Buddhist sense, this release or salvation from what is characteristic of human and worldly existence, converges on the transcendental, here in this very existence. The word transcendental has certainly to be conceded to the

Buddhist, together with the right to determine what it connotes. Since this state does not gravitate towards the earthly and is thus not moored to it, it is very precisely described in Buddhism **as a state untraceable here and therefore much less in a world beyond**. Much confusion with regard to Buddhism, particularly with regard to Nirvana which is its ultimate goal has arisen out of this inability to view it in terms of Buddhist values.

It is as a result of the discriminative consciousness of man which is referred to as *viññāṇa* getting loaded with too many mundane or worldly leanings that the life process both here and now, as well as in the future existences to come, gets charged with vitality or produces the life continuum which the Buddhists refer to as *bhava* or becoming. It is this process which renders the individual being in time-space dimension. Hence in the formula of Causal Genesis or *Paṭiccasamuppāda* [Sk. *Pratītyasamutpāda*] we find the statement *bhavapaccayā jāti* which means 'on account of becoming birth is generated'. The very traceability of the individual is on account of this density and opacity which his consciousness acquires in the process. Consequently it is possible to point out and say that his mind has these propensities, that it leans on this or that [*idaṃ nissitaṃ viññāṇan'ti*]. It is the very fuel on which life, with all its manifestations, glows. On the other hand, the scope of salvation in Buddhism is to bring about a de-conditioning of the mind or an ultimate reduction of the activity of the discriminative consciousness. Hence in Nirvana, the process of this fuel generation ceases and the very basis of becoming [*bhava*], and not of the being, is totally destroyed. For Nirvana in Buddhism neither equates with nor is dependent on physical death.

In consequence of this, an inquiry with regard to what happens to a being who has attained Nirvana, after his death, in relation to the process of becoming this or that, is an unwarranted question. A predication with regard to his identity even in this very life is an untenable position. His mind being totally de-conditioned and being completely free from leanings of any sort, no identity

whatsoever can be established of him, now or for the future. *Samsāra*-wise [i.e. life-process wise], he has ceased to be. This position with regard to the emancipated being, the one who has attained the state of Nirvana is clearly enunciated in the Buddhist texts.

It stands well defended as the logical outcome of Buddhist thinking. The Alagaddūpama Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [MN.I.p.140] expresses this very clearly. Its importance as a vital piece of information for the correct understanding of the scope of salvation in Buddhism, eschatologically, cannot be overrated. But lamentably, the Pali Text Society translation of this passage has completely missed this point and produced in its place something which does not consistently fit into the logic of the Buddhist theory of salvation. For the purpose of clarification, the original text in Pali, together with the P.T.S translation and the suggested new rendering, is added here.

*Evaṃ vimuttacittaṃ kho bhikkhave bhikkhuṃ sa-Indā devā sa-Brahmakā sa-Pajāpatikā anvesaṃ nādhigacchanti - idam nissitam tathāgatassa viñāṇa'ti. Tam kissa hetu. Ditthevāham bhikkhave dhamme tathāgatam ananuvejjo' ti vadāmi* [MN.I.p.140].

P.T.S. Translation :

Monks, when a monk's mind is freed thus, the devas with Indra, Brahma and Pajāpati, do not succeed in their search if they think : `This is the discriminative consciousness attached to a Tathāgata' What is the reason for this ? I, monks, say here and now that a Tathāgata is untraceable.

Suggested translation :

Monks, devas with Indra, Brahma and Prajāpati, tracking down a monk whose mind is freed, i.e. a monk who is emancipated, would not discover the discriminative consciousness of such a one (Tathāgata) to be leaning on this or that (*idam nissitam*). What is the reason for this ? I, monks, say that a Tathāgata is untraceable even in this very life.

This same curiosity to track down the consciousness of the emancipated being after his death, is recorded in the story of Godhika in the Samyutta Nikaya (SN.I.p.122). The Buddha declares that Godhika having attained the state of Nirvana passed away with a consciousness that finds no foothold : *appatitthitena ca bhikkhave viññāṇena godhiko kulaputto parinibbuto*.

As against this, the goal in terms of Christian concepts is given as 'admission to eternal bliss.' Here again, concept-wise and vocabulary-wise, the Buddhists would appear to be somewhat different from the Christians. Considering the fleeting and transitory nature of worldly phenomena which is consequently labelled as unsatisfactory, transcendence from it must logically bring about its antithesis, namely a non-transitory nature. But the bliss of Nirvana in Buddhism consists primarily of this elimination of transitoriness. Thus Nirvana is described as being non-birth (*ajāta*), non-decay (*ajara*) and non-death (*amata*), i.e. free from features which are characteristic of *samsāra* or the round of worldly existence. To be in this mortal frame of man and be assured that there would be no more subjection to these travails is truly the bliss of Nirvana.

Even where they manifest themselves in the life of a liberated disciple during the remaining days of his life, it is as though they matter not to him any more and count for nothing in his life. That is why it is possible for him to say, with calm and composure-'I yearn not for life, I long not for death' [ *Nābhinandāmi maraṇaṃ nābhinandāmi jīvitaṃ* ]. This was said by none other than the great disciple Sariputta (See Theragāthā vv.1002-3). In this state one sees and goes through the consummation of the religious life in Buddhism. A liberated Buddhist disciple is a *jīvan mukta* in the true sense of the word. His release is not eschatological. This alone, and not more nor less, is true Buddhist salvation. It is the transcendence of the true Buddhist disciple. The Buddhists have not the need like their fellow-religionists in Jainism, Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta, to think of a *videha mukti*, a release beyond death, to be looked upon as final liberation.

At this stage one is compelled to observe that it would be difficult to find in

Buddhism, with regard to the notion of salvation, a parallel to the above mentioned Christian idea of 'admission to eternal bliss.' In this context one cannot afford to lose sight of the basic divergences in the definition of life, the explanation of its origin and its ultimate goal in the two systems. To insist on a uniformity here is far from desirable and to assume the existence of such a uniformity is far from the truth. One has to point out that even the assumed relationship of the liberated *tathāgata* in Buddhism with the Absolute in the Upanishads is only a forced one. Of the many words used to refer to the state of Nirvana, *amata* or non-death or deathless is the direct outcome of the preceding and earlier concept of *ajāta* or non-birth. Primarily Nirvana is the state which signifies the cessation of the process of being born again. Some of the Pali phrases which signify this are *khīṇā jāti* [birth is terminated] and *nāparam itthattāyā 'ti pajānāti* [comprehends that there is no more of being such and such] as at MN.I.138. Thus the idea of deathless as an attribute of Nirvana is a derivative and negative concept, coming in the wake of 'no more rebirth'. Reference to Nirvana as 'the realm of the Eternal', while one appears to be making use of Pali sources belonging to the Theravada tradition, has to be judged as a gross distortion [The God of Buddha by Jamshed Fozdar pp.23,24].

Lastly, let us take note of the crowning phrase of the more or less Christian definition of salvation viz. 'wrought for man by the atonement of Christ.' The approximating likeness of this concept in Buddhism is seen in the Bodhisattva doctrine of the Mahayanic schools where the magnanimity of the saviour in the person of the bodhisattva works out the moral, social and spiritual emancipation of man. Acts of sacrifice and surrender of what is personally beneficial in the interests of the multitude marks out the bodhisattva as one who is dedicated to work for the salvation of suffering humanity. Texts like the Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra and the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra (Ch.24 entitled Samantamukhaparivarta) deal with this role of the bodhisattva in great detail.

It is on such a religio-philosophical basis as described so far that the

Buddhists structure their salvation machinery. The goal of their salvation is Nirvana which is the complete cessation of the worldly life process as it is discernible to man (compare such uses in Pali as `acchijji vaṭṭam : terminated the process of revolving in samsara' and `chinnam vaṭṭam na vaṭṭati : the wheel is destroyed, it rolls not again' at Ud.p.75. Note the imagery of the wheel rolling on. Also `ettāvatā vaṭṭam vaṭṭati itthattam paññāpanāya : So long will the wheel roll on establishing a state of thusness' at DN.II.63f. It is this process of the wheel of life rolling on which is termed samsāra, and stands in marked contrast to Nirvana which is the cessation of that process [ *nibbuti* and *nirvṛti* ]. The travails thereof are known as *dukkha* and transcendence or release from them is what is implied by the term *moksa*.

In Buddhism, the discovery of both the malady as well as the remedy for it was made by the Buddha himself at a human level of analysis and inference and through a diligent application to the perfection of wisdom via a process of personal self-culture and self-development. This is why the Buddha ultimately declared that as far as salvation is concerned man is without the external refuge of a Divine Being [*attāṇo loko anabhissaro* MN.II.68]. Another very popular Pali term used for the concept of salvation in Buddhism is *vimutti* (Sk. *vimukti*) which also etymologically means release. Having looked upon this release from the turmoil of life or the cessation thereof as the real salvation of man, the Buddha in his profound but simple thesis of the Four Noble Truths, prescribed in his Truth of the Way or *magga sacca* a path leading to its attainment. It is the path that leads man from grief to happiness, from death to immortality, from worldliness to transcendence. In the process of winning this salvation according to the tradition of Theravada Buddhism the role of the Buddha begins and ends at the level of indicating what this path is. The Buddha is in fact called the proclaimer of the way, hitherto undeclared : *anakkhātassa maggassa akkhātā* (MN.III.8). The striving for the successful attainment of it is entirely the work of each individual. `Each individual must make an effort by himself. The Buddhas only indicate the way : `Tumhehi kiccam ātappam akkhātāro tathāgatā (Dhammapada v.276).



In marked contrast to the salvation process in most theistic religions which invoke qualities of heart like faith and devotion (*śraddhā* and *bhakti*), the Buddhists stress on the role of the individual towards this same attainment which requires the development of the human personality in a different direction. First and foremost, it requires initiative and effort, the first steps in putting oneself on gear, as it were. This attempt at making a sustained effort or application of *virīya* (*virīyam ārabhati*) is in fact, one of the ten perfections (*virīya pāramī*) which in the tradition of the Theravada a bodhisattva is required to develop towards the attainment of his Buddhahood. Of this too, the initiative or getting into stride (*arabbha dhātu*) comes to be specially commented upon as a vigorous and vital aspect of personality. This, together with resolve or determination (*adhiṭṭhāna*) which is another of the ten perfections, invokes the qualities of the heart with a different stress. Development of the Buddhist path to salvation on the other hand is predominantly weighted on the side of qualities of the head. Decisive mental alertness (*sati* or Skt. *smṛti*) is an early requirement for the development of a meaningful concentration (*samādhi*) of mind. All these are invariably found to be prerequisites for the acquisition of the very vital tool for the salvation process, which is none other than the penetrative wisdom or *paññā* (Skt. *Prajñā*) which is the crown jewel of Buddhist salvation yet serving only as a means to an end and not an end in itself.

As far as the Buddhist concept of salvation is concerned, it is to be observed that this transcendence from the world is the result of comprehending the true nature of the world and consequently of coming to proper relations with it. The forces that bind man to it, in rather inevitably painful ways, are to be personally comprehended in order to be able to reduce their gravitation towards the earthly. This involves both an individual and inward adjustment as well as adjustments with social implications. There is no denying the fact that the former is more basic and primary while the social implications are more derivative. While this is necessarily so, it does not reduce the ethical richness of the religious system. Starting with the religiously primary consideration of self-adjustment with the goal

of salvation in mind, we have to focus attention on two major items which relate to this. The degree of involvement of man in the affairs of the world being the basic core of the phenomenon of his unhappiness in life or *dukkha*, the remedial measures towards its elimination or reduction require that man studies, in the first instance, the reason for this involvement. At the same time he has also to investigate and find out for himself why this involvement brings about unhappiness. This latter leads to an exhaustive analysis of the true nature of the world or worldly phenomena.

It would be profitable at this stage to indicate that as far as the early phase of Buddhism known as the Theravada is concerned the search for reality is no more than the desire to comprehend the real and true nature (*yathabhucca*) of the world in which we are and with which we are constantly in communication. It is to be categorically stated that this is not a search for a **Reality beyond this life or beyond this world**. Nor does the attempt of the Buddhist to grasp the real and true nature of the world lead to the assumption, as with some of the other Indian philosophies, that the empirical world is no more than *māyā* or a mind-made illusion. The world does exist on its own tempo. In the Buddhist analysis and scrutiny it becomes evident that the world, including man therein, is essentially subject to the law of change (*vipariṇāmadhamma*). Known also as the law of impermanence or *anicca*, this basic character necessarily generates in the mind of the worlding states of conflict, tension and frustration, on account of his own inability to cope with these changes which, though by no means welcome are characteristic of the world in which he lives. Of the three *signata* or characteristics which mark the life of man in the world, it is this changing, transitory nature, its *anicca* characteristic which in its wake brings along the other two, namely unsatisfactoriness or *dukkha* and substancelessness or *anatta* (soullessness).

Such a world view or an awareness of the true characteristics of the world must put the Buddhist disciple who is endowed with a degree of mindfulness and

self-awareness [ i.e. *sati* and *sampajañña* or being *sato* and *sampajāno* ] in a position of guarded activity. The over-enlargement of the ego with an associated assertion of I and mine has then necessarily to be kept at a minimum. Speaking in Buddhist terms, derivative notions of greed and hatred (*lobha* and *dosa*) which start spiraling around the assertion of I and mine [ *ahaṅkāra* and *mamimkāra-mānānusaya* ] are set in motion by likes and dislikes (*piya* and *appiya*), in terms of man's desire to possess or reject (*abhijjhā* and *vyāpāda*). A true Buddhist disciple is called upon to start his religious life with a regulation of this process. The impact of this psycho-ethical correction in ultimate terms of salvation, is comparable to the two sides of a coin. The result of this ethical correction is concurrently active in the two areas, individual and social.

A disciple who is in quest of his salvation is thus seen to be gradually working towards the reduction and eradication of **these pernicious traits of mind**, namely **greed and hatred, resulting from his personal pursuit of pleasure**. In their place, there develops in the mind of the disciple love and charity, a desire to give and share instead of a greed to selfishly possess as well as a desire to love, tolerate and accommodate rather than hate, reject and repel. Salvation-wise, these virtues are individually elevating and ennobling, and socially exhilarating and leading to productive growth. They form the very bases from which a man's right to his life and property comes to be vindicated. Mind you, the very second stage of the Noble Eight-fold Path insist on this religious culture at the stage of re-structuring a Buddhist's thought pattern or *sammā saṅkappa*.

The survey which I have just concluded was undertaken with a view to indicate the intellectual basis on which the Buddhist formula of salvation operates. However, it is to be appreciated that the socio-intellectual changes which come upon the individual at this stage are, from the point of view of the Buddhist, absolved from the charge of 'being purely theoretical'. With the Buddhists, all activities have their origin at the level of the mind (*Manopubbangamā dhammā* Dh. vv. 1 & 2). Correctness or otherwise, propriety

or impropriety, of all action committed by man is determined in terms of the intellectual activity, or in other words, decision making undertaken by the doer (*manasā ce pasannena ... manasā ce padutthena bhāsatī vā karotī vā*. Ibid.). Even before an act is rendered in physical terms through word or deed, it already registers at the mind level its impact on the doer. Human activity lends itself to evaluation with greater ease at the level of physical expression. Their social desirability or viciousness is felt unmistakably at this level of public expression. In Buddhism, this gauging of human activity is attempted from both ends. In the Ambalatthika Rāhulovāda Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha in his admonitions to Rahula, uses the yardstick of results of action to determine their approvability. 'That which is detrimental to one's own well-being, or to the well-being of the other or of both, should unhesitatingly be given up as being bad', says the Buddha (See MLS.II.89f).

In counselling the Kalamas. on the other hand. the Buddha advises them to determine the nature of their motivation to activity (as having its origin in greed, hatred or delusion) and to regulate their activity to be of non-pernicious motivation, free from greed, hatred and delusion.

It would now be easy to indicate and clarify that the Buddhist way to salvation is founded on this theoretical basis and on this intellectual analysis. The Buddha was concerned with the unsatisfactoriness ( or *dukkha*) of the world in which man was caught up and he earnestly searched a way out, until he himself attained the stage of enlightenment or Buddhahood, thus transcending this worldliness, and prescribed a way (*magga* or *patipadā*) for the salvation of man.

This is the fourth of the Four Noble Truths propounded by the Buddha. Designated as the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*) it covers a very vast expanse of human development, both individual and social. It starts with a basic intellectual grasp of the human situation, upholding that such a corrected vision about life alone could regulate it, harnessing its resources for its own redemption. This is termed *sammā ditṭhi* or corrected vision, man's vision about

life and the world. Working with an efficient intellectual quantum, provided both from within and without [*parato ca ghoso yoniso ca manasikāro* MN.I.294] man is able judge for himself the ill-effects of his own actions. First and foremost, he learns to cultivate the Buddhist attitude to life, the non-permissibility of a staggering ego (*sakkāyadiṭṭhī*), a position which is most desirable salvation-wise, to the individual. Psychologically, this elimination of the basis of individuation or personal assertion, brings in a whole series of changes in social values. This brings in a direct relationship of man to man in terms of friendship, totally non-discriminative. This is *maṭṭrī* or loving kindness. This universal love which is the result of the obliteration of the ego is not restricted even by considerations of human and animal. Life in the universe, both great and small, comes within its range. So does friend and foe, those near and far, those seen and unseen [*Ye keci pāṇabhūtatthi tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā dīhga vā ye mahantā vā majjhimārassakāṇukathulā ditthā vā ye va addiṭṭhā ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā*. Sn.vv.164-7]

Consequent to this corrected (*sammā*) vision about life, everything else that follows in the noble eight-fold way necessarily acquire the tone of correctness. Thoughts which spring from such a basis are invariably wholesome thoughts (*sammā saṅkappa* : item no 2). As these manifest themselves in action they give rise to inoffensive, fruitful speech (*sammā vācā* : item no 3) and justifiable forms of activity (*sammā kammanta* : item no 4). Up to this stage, while the individual is being cultured in terms of his thought, word and deed, society is at the same time benefiting from the non-corrosiveness of individual action. This being the graduation of the individual on the path of salvation as we have already indicated above, we witness a twofold benefit in two distinct spheres.

While gradual spiritual ascendance on the path of salvation is assured to the individual on the one hand, we also find him fitting himself to life in the world with great ease and with even greater harmony. Conflict and tension as far as each individual is concerned, thereby necessarily step out of the way. On the other hand, society is not harassed by erring individuals. The composition of society

would witness a greater percentage of such persons of corrected vision and regulated action. Item no 5 of this code for salvation, namely *sammā ājīva* or corrected livelihood grooms the life style of an individual in society in such a way as to make society completely safe for living. The term *ājīva* implies the means whereby one makes a living. At the minimum, man must find the food and clothing for himself and his dependants. But he must earn his bread, himself. But this wherewithal for living which in Buddhist contexts is referred to as *bhoga* has to be acquired by just and fair means : *dhammikehi dhammaladdhehi bhogehi* (AN.II.67). One has to toil for it (*bāhā balaparicitehi*. Ibid.) and earn it with the sweat of one's brow (*sedāvakkhittehi*. Ibid.). Thus in terms of Buddhist values, while it is accepted that life is dear to every one (*sabbesaṃ jīvitam piyam* : Dhp. v.130), it has to be nurtured and kept going by fair and honourable means. These social safeguards, built into the Buddhist scheme of salvation, enhances its relevance in a highly competitive commercialized society, where money values and material turnover, and those alone, seem to topple down other considerations.

Viewing the Buddhist concept of salvation from yet another angle, we find the process leading to it built upon three ascending terraces. This is referred to as the training via the threefold-culture or *tisso sikkhā*. Here too, in the final ascent is perfection of wisdom or attainment of undistorted vision about oneself. In the Eight-fold way discussed earlier the perfection of right concentration (*sammā samādhi* or item no. 8) brings about perfected wisdom or *sammā ñāṇa*. This is what precedes salvation or release (*vimutti*). The threefold culture of *sikkhā* too, has wisdom (*paññā*) as its final state preceding release [*sammā ñāṇassa sammā vimutti pahoti*. DN.II.217]. While the second stage of this training geared towards salvation, isolates the individual, more or less, to a transcendent plane, from his involvement with the mundane, its basis or *sīla* deals essentially with the correction of man in relation to the social environment. This, in other words, is no doubt the moral uplift of man. As far as this code of *sīla* is concerned, there is a difference in scope and content between that of monk and layman. Geared

towards the attainment of the goal of salvation, worked out through a gradual process of up-lifting, a Buddhist disciple rids himself of obnoxious patterns of behaviour through word and deed and cultivates positive traits of character which contribute to the healthy growth of social harmony and concord. The Buddhist charter for this is the 'code of five precepts' or *pañcasīla*. Abstaining from the destruction of life both human and animal, he develops boundless love for all life, working for their weal and welfare. This indeed is the first moral precept of the Buddhist layman. Abstaining from stealing, he cultivates the manifold aspects of honesty, preventing the alienation of any one from his legitimate possessions. A special precept safeguards the privacy of his domestic life, the safety and security of the females of his household. Honesty of word and deed is guaranteed and safeguarded by the fourth precept relating to speech. This protects and upholds societal interconnectedness founded on honesty and trustworthiness. Finally, there is included the fifth precept of abstinence from drugs and alcoholic drinks for the sake of greater sanity and sound judgement among men.

Thus, it may be said that from whatever angle one looks upon the Buddhist path to salvation, it becomes abundantly clear that it is geared towards and invariably results in character formation or reformation of character which the Buddhists refer to as a 'developed or cultured self' (*bhāvitatta*). The real standing of such a person is indeed both within the society and outside it, with its individual and social dimensions.

Ven Professor Dhammavihari  
Vajirañāna Dharmāyanaya  
Maharagama,  
Sri Lanka

### (3) Child Care and Growth of Love

- A Buddhist approach to the subject.

Here is a subject of immense value and considerable interest to mankind as a whole, and on our side we have Buddhism, a living faith with a history of more than two and a half millennia. Within the first five hundred years of its appearance in India, i.e. even before the birth of Christ, Buddhism had a tremendous impact on the life and thought of almost the whole of Asia, making an inestimable contribution to the culture of diverse Asian ethnic groups, from the Caspian Sea in the west to the Japanese archipelago in the east. They include the Iranians of nearly two thousand years ago, the Tibetans, the Chinese from about the first century A.D., the Koreans and the Japanese coming in their wake, to mention only a few among the many.

To get a glimpse of this impressive panorama one must read a little bit of honest, good history, including such men like **al Biruni** who made his historical records more than a thousand years ago. Buddhism being a religion which is referred to as being anthropocentric, i.e. primarily interested in the welfare of man through his own initiative and enterprise, has very little need to appeal to gods above to guide his destinies and elevate him to heights both here in this life to fight his enemies and befriend the rest as well as for glory in a life beyond this. Theocentrism or the avowed appeal to the power of divine sources for the salvation of man is the story of many religions which existed before the appearance of Buddhism and of many others which came after it.

Therefore, even from the earliest times, Buddhist teachings show concern about the growth of human beings into full stature, from childhood to adolescence, healthy and wealthy and wise. Keeping in mind the ultimate release of man from the painful situations of worldly life, in the finally transcendental state of Nirvana, Buddhism guides every man, woman and child to regulate and



restrain his or her life for the good of oneself and those around us. For it is in the fullness of culture, in the growth and development of the human personality that man transcends the evils of the world.

This subject of child care and growth of love is one of vital consideration for healthy growth of family life and for consolidation of social coherence. It is thoroughly understood by the Buddha and he imparts some delightful instructions to parents on this issue. A large quantum of these instructions are contained within the fourfold grouping called the *satara sangraha vastu* or instructions for parents on the 'four ways of efficient serving' and looking after one's progeny. In other words it is the subject of adequate care of children by those who beget them, even if the home has now dropped to the lamentable level of 'one parent family' or 'fatherless home' in many parts or many cultures of the world. Or even if children had their origin as test-tube babies.

Before we take up for examination the texts which deal with this area of admonition, we would do well to take note of a graphic simile which the Buddha uses here to emphasise the absolute indispensability of these parental virtues in our social structure. For the smooth, safe and successful running of the social process these virtues serve the same function as does a lynch-pin to keep in position, without falling off, the wheels of a running vehicle. Our Pali text Anguttara Nikaya [AN. II.32], puts this idea beautifully in Pali as *Ete ca saṅgahā loke rathassā'nīva yāyato* : like the lynch-pin of a chariot in motion. Those of you who own motor cars today and often run about in them in the country and the town, even more than is necessary, have to be fully aware of the need to have the nuts on all your wheels tightened equally well. Whether you yourself do it, or the men at the garage who service your car, it has to be done to avert a major disaster on the highway.

In order that we may not have to face such tragic accidents on our social highways, of incidents of child suicide, of juvenile criminals murdering even their parents and the like, let us take a closer look at these words of wisdom of the

Buddha. For indeed a wise man he was, and he tries to safeguard the human community, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, against such crises and calamitous situations. We might then perhaps, with our healthy and wholesome approach to our children, be able to keep the DEVIL away from approaching our younger generation, our sons and daughters, our nephews and nieces.

We know that he does creep along the secretive tracks of gaiety and entertainment which include dance, music and song, together with excessive eating and drinking, reaching almost Bacchanalian levels. It **even embraces sex without any considerations of propriety of time, place and persons**, breaching all institutional decorum of relationships. Such lapses, despicable as they are, already anticipated in the Buddhist texts under the disasters that come with the abandoning of the sense of shame and fear in man, referred to in our Buddhist texts as *hiri* and *ottappa* [ Sinh. *lajjā bhaya* ]. These two brilliant concepts, a sense of shame and a sense of fear, says the Anguttara Nikaya [AN.I.51], govern the world. They are like powerful beams of head-lamps. If they do not prevail, recognition of social institutional considerations like mother, mother's sister, father's sister, wife of the teacher, wives of other respected persons would cease to be. Behaviour in the world would come to utter chaos like that among goats and rams, fowls and pigs, dogs and jackals [ *Sambhedaṃ loko āgamissati yathā ajelakā kukkuṭasūkarā sonasigālā*. loc.cit.].

Here now are the four wheels, keeping close to the imagery which we have already chosen, which must be fitted perfectly to this delightful vehicle called the home in which the parents and children are expected to live and move about with much love and concern for each other. Within it there can be no resentments and no strained relationships.

The first of these is the parental obligation to provide for the children the material needs of their day to day existence. It is called *dāna* which means giving or gifting [ i.e. provision ]. Food and clothing would rank foremost among these, *ghāsacchādana* as known to Buddhist texts. Discretion and good

judgement on the part of parents with regard to the quality and quantity of these, pruning down excesses and preventing wastage and extravagance, go a long way in the production of highly cultured and desirably refined children. A meaningful and relevant expression used in Buddhist texts with reference to this area is *sukheti piṇeti* which means providing comfort to those persons who profit from such *dāna* or gifting and producing joy in them in consequence thereof. Let us ask ourselves whether there is any man, woman or child who does not look out for such comfort and joy in their daily life which come as a product or by-product of healthy interpersonal relationships, irrespective of the rank or position they hold in the home and society.

The generosity and liberality of affluent parents who lack the restraint of intellectual and spiritual maturity is known to have produced many a criminal in elitist societies. It would save headaches and heart burns to many in our midst to take note of this. On the other hand, the failure or the inability to supply these basic needs would result in the generation of a great deal of resentment and consequent revolt in the home. This kind of bitterness at the domestic level results in considerable fermentation, ending up in the production of deadly or death-dealing explosions whose ill-effects pervade the society at large. So one has to make sure that in the home the children are adequately and lovingly looked after with regard to their needs of food and clothing. A wide range of other peripheral needs for the young may be listed from time to time, varying from place to place, which should be reckoned with by the older with understanding and sympathy.

As item number two, our list provides for gentleness and sweetness in speech towards the children by the parents. This is referred to in Pali as *peyya-vajja* which in Sinhala would mean *priya vacana* or pleasant speech. As far as parents are concerned, this is expressive of a further area of parental concern and a greater depth of genuine family affection. It is to be remembered that this area can never be substituted by the provision of material gifts alone. This again

is an area in which many parents whom the society expects to know better and be wiser blunder hopelessly. Many homes just flounder for want of this virtue. We have witnessed many instances of such homes generating psychopathic products in consequence of this. It is of interest to note that in Buddhism this virtue of pleasantness of speech pertains not only to the area of child care. It embraces the entire gamut of social wholesomeness, and Buddhism prescribes in great detail regarding the quality of speech of every one and for every one. Speech being primarily a medium of communication which builds up interpersonal relationships, one is required to be conscious of proprieties of time, motivation and mode of conversation in addition to the veracity of one's speech. [ *Pañc ' ime bhikkhave vacanapathā yehi vo pare vadamānā vadeyyuṃ kālena vā akālena vā bhūtena vā abhūtena vā saṇhena vā pharusena vā atthasaṃhitena vā anatthasaṃhitena vā mettacittā vā dosantarā vā*. MN. 1. 126 ]. Very often people discover, and that a little too late, that many items in our conversations with others, would have been much safer undelivered than ever delivered.

In the Vinaya injunction forbidding the use of harsh speech [ i.e. *omasavāde pācittiyaṃ* / Pacittiya II. at Vin. IV. p. 5f. ] , the Buddha himself narrates a beautiful story of the past in a *jātakam*, in which he was the unhappy victim of such viciousness in the hands of men. [ See also J.1.191f. for the same Nandivīsāla Jataka .]. It is an animal story in which a draught ox by the name of Nandivīsāla was very much heart-broken because of the abusive words of his owner. This same injunction is made in a more historical and down-to-earth setting in the story of the slave girl Kāli in the Kakacūpama Sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya [ MN.I.123 ] where we are taught not to utter evil and vicious words [ *na ca pāpikaṃ vācaṃ nicchāressāmī'* ti.].

Buddhist thinking knows of further areas of child care. It is in the counselling and guiding of children with regard to their welfare and development. This is referred to as *atthacariyā*. This means being involved in and working for the growth and success of one's progeny [ *attano hitakathaṃ vaḍḍhikathaṃ eva*

*paccāsiṃsati*. AA.III.65 ]. And finally we have *samānattatā* which is none other than experiential egalitarianism, or 'feeling an equal' in at least some situations which gives one a sense of joy and acquisition. The Anguttara Nikaya Commentary quoted above, explaining this mentions specifically that some persons do not wish to have any of the three privileges like gifts [*dāna*], pleasant words [*peyyavajja*] etc. referred to above but would love to share equality of status in sitting together in company or sharing meals together. It is worth reproducing the Commentary in full here. [*Samānattatā ' ti samānasukhadukkhabhāvo. Ekacco hi dānādisu ekam ' pi na paccāsiṃsati. Ekāsane nisajjaṃ ekapallaṅke sayanaṃ ekato bhojanan ' ti evaṃ samānasukhadukkhāṃ paccāsiṃsati. So sace gahaṭṭhassa jātiyā pabbajitassa sīlena sadiso hoti tass ' āyam samānattatā kātabbā*. AA.III.65] .

This implies that parents are and should be capable of stepping down or rising up to the level of thinking [or emotional moods] of their children. Along with it is needed the sharing of their experience, both happiness and grief, frustration and achievement, at their own level. It is simply being together with people as equals, at least as occasions require, heedless of differences in age or status. This alerts us to a serious social need of the day. This, we would broadly call **emotional mobility**.

It is lamentably true that there are many breaches and gaps in our social set-up. These gaps, like the most disastrous generation gap of today, have to be bridged for social coherence and social solidarity. As indicated in this doctrinal message we have studied so far, this need has been adequately visualised in Buddhist thinking and remedial measures provided and discussed.

The Buddha is very firm in his assertion that if the benefits of these four services or considerations on the part of parents do not adequately reach up to the children, the parents, whether it be mother or father, are not likely to get any honour or respect from their children.

As far as the up-bringing of children is concerned one could not discover a more convincing and a more commanding direction issued at any level. The Buddha's guideline on this is certainly to be heeded. Here is the original in Pali. This is well worth being written on the bed-heads of parents who have children to rear, either at the first or at the second generation level, as children and grand-children.

*Ete ca saṅgahā nāssu na mātā puttakāraṇā  
labhetha mānaṃ pūjaṃ vā na pitā puttakāraṇā.*

AN.II.32

If these services [ towards children ] are not known to exist, then neither the mother nor the father would receive any courtesy or attention from their children.

It will now be appreciated that the much lamented generation gap of today is generated through this sin of omission on the part of the older, namely the lack of communication from one generation to the other, in either way. The ill-health and morbidity of these relationships is generally one of descent from above, from those in power and position.

On the other hand, in the successful nurture of these virtues lies a robust and healthy growth of human relationships of mutual respect and love, of trust and reliance, in the human community at large. Through this healthy nurture and culture at the early domestic level, men in society become an honourable and praiseworthy lot.

*Tasmā mahattaṃ pappoti pāsaṃsā ca bhavanti te.*

Ibid.

With a vastness of vision which is characteristic of the Buddha [ and that is why he is called *sabbaññū* . Sinh. *sarvagña* ], he endeavours to prop up the cordiality of family relationships and give them vitality and robustness by admonishing the children to hold their parents in high esteem and respect them. They are to be looked after, he says, for the contribution they have made towards

their upbringing. Respect and care of parents [*mātāpitu-upaṭṭhānaṃ*] is held in Buddhism as a high-ranking virtue [*etaṃ maṇigalaṃ uttamaṃ*]. Note its domestic origin and its social relevance. Its market value, its selling price, is pushed further where it is referred to as *mātāpettibharo* [responsible for the care and sustenance of parents] and this virtue is said to make a true gentleman of a man [*sappuriso*] and is capable of conferring upon the doer even the kingship in heaven [*sakkatta*]. It is among the seven steps [*satta-vatapada*] leading to that state.

The life of the Buddhist, viewed from any angle, is one of multiple relationships. This multiplicity is derived from the basic character of society itself. The six social segments like parent / child, teacher / pupil, husband / wife, friend / friend, master / servant, clergy / laity which are given in the Sigāla Sutta [DN.III.188 ff.] in terms of familial, extra-familial and inter-familial relationships provide an astonishing example of the comprehensiveness of this vision. Regulation and correction of these relationships is intended to be brought about through religious persuasion and via life in the home, as it does happen in the admonition of young Sigāla by the Buddha. The healthiest and most rewarding point is when and where this is brought about through modification and adjustment to accord with both sides, i.e. the individual and society, the home being here the society in miniature.

The growth of love in the home and consequent courtesy and respect reciprocally brought about is the goal of the *satara sangraha vastu* on which we have focussed attention here. They are essentially sponsored and nurtured in the home by parents. Their balmy good effects radiate into society, making it a place so full of love and consideration. The wise men and women of society who act in accordance with these are to be lauded for this: *pāsaṃsā ca bhavanti te*.

If the society is less wise and fails in this, the wheels of society will go flying in all directions due to the absence of the controlling pin which keep them in position, and all will have to accept the consequent social holocaust and be

victims thereof which would be invariable and inevitable.

Ven. Professor Dhammavihari  
Siri Vajiranana Dharmayatanaya  
Maharagama  
Sri Lanka

## **(4) The Human Resource**

as viewed from the Buddhist religio-cultural angle.

More than ever before, it has now become vital that policy makers in a state, at all levels, become sensitive to the need of value judgements. It is then and only then that they can, with a fair measure of conviction face the consequences of their decisions and hold themselves responsible for same. We often undertake to do many things, but often with very little qualitative assessment of what we are doing and with even less thought as for whose benefit we are doing them.

With these prefatory remarks now let me present my paper to you. It must be stated in no uncertain terms at the very outset that a major theme in Buddhist social philosophy is the successful development and harnessing of the manpower resources of a country, individually and collectively. One must carefully examine the target which the Buddhists mean to achieve thereby, which invariably is multidimensional and the methods they propose to adopt to make such a venture a success.

Now that we are assembled here to analyse, assess and administer manpower resources available to us, I should first explain the Buddhist concept of man as a prelude to our discussion. Man is said to be man, according to Buddhism, because of his mental accomplishment and achievement: *manassa ussannattā manussā*. *Mana* means mind and *ussannatta* means the lofty heights



of development it has reached. Let us examine this a little further. Man, unlike the animal, does not move on in life through built in responses and reflexes.

Man is gifted with the capacity to make decisions, adjust himself to new situations, be sensitive not only to his own feelings but also to those of others, make concessions and sacrifices on what are carefully judged by him to be valid considerations. Man, according to Buddhism, is such a functionally effective and efficient unit in the social machinery of the human community. He is not subordinated to a higher will above himself. What he does is not dictated by a higher authority above and beyond humanity. He works on a basically horizontal, humanistic value system which invariably forms also the basis of his transcendental aspirations, by no means divorced from his mundane living. According to correct Buddhist thinking one has to start with what is known and near and make that the basis for everything that is beyond and is hoped for. It is in this sense that we would make bold to say that **the road to Nirvāna runs through the highways of society**. Here one cannot fail to respect the position that the social philosophy of Buddhism is meant to prepare the ground-plan for its religious super structure. It is equally true that a Buddhist cannot expect to reach his religious goal without a sound social philosophy.

Now let me start with the first proposition of Buddhist social philosophy, namely the *pañcasīla* or the Code of Five Moral Precepts. It is not unusual to hear occasional rumblings from our midst, from all manner of people, about the difficulty of observing these simple basic injunctions which are rooted **in an awareness of fundamental human rights**. This is nothing less than a lamentably callous lack of social responsibility. A clear and unconfused knowledge of basic Buddhist teachings would reveal to any one the intense degree of social concern and social relevance the precepts of the *pañcasīla* embody. They uphold a person's right for the safety of his life and a person's right over his justifiably acquired possessions. These are universally acclaimed human rights. Here I wish to draw your attention to the UN charter on Fundamental Human Rights.

They do not demand anybody's leanings to a particular religious faith or to a particular political creed. They can very well be practised and upheld without any thoughts of religious conversion.

This universality is further attested in Buddhist texts where the *pañcasīla* becomes the basic admonition of the Universal Monarch or Rājā Cakkavatti who has to be accepted by the whole world as their one and only ruler. The ruler, in turn, tells the people that his major concern is that **the world should respect the moral order**, and that he does not interfere with the basic rights of people in deciding on their political ideology. **As long as the moral order is maintained in a manner that serves mankind, it is not the intention of the Cakkavatti to interfere with the political structure of any country.** In any country where Buddhism has contributed to the formation of the cultural milieu, one has to take serious notice of the above remarks about the insistence on the moral order before attempting to examine or analyse the socio-economic problems of that country.

I shall now introduce to you in brief some of the authentic Buddhist texts which deal with the subject of man power resources directly and precisely in terms of social requirements.

The Kūṭadanta Sutta of the Digha Nikaya [ DN.I. p.135f. ] handles this at the state level on the basis of professional skills and personal aptitude and temperament, with a view to ensuring maximum utilisation of manpower resources. Strict adherence to casting the right type in the right place is recommended. Further it is also recognised that there should be adequate stimuli and inspiration from the employer for the maximum output of work from the employee. Satisfactory provision of food at work place, adequate remuneration for the work done and further aids like health care and medical attention for the successful pursuance of the employment undertaken are among the interesting issues dealt with in the above quoted sutta.

On the other hand, the Sigāla Sutta [DN.III. p.188 f.] deals with this issue of

utilisation of manpower resources in the community from the domestic angle, i.e. at the familial level. The main theme there is the respectful recognition of the services rendered, and in this case, particularly to the family as a unit. The relationships discussed there imply familial, extra-familial and inter-familial considerations. While the family is recognised as the basic unit of social operation, the satisfactory administration of the family appears to have also regarded as important the services rendered by many others from different areas of service like the teacher [*ācariya*] who contributes to the education of the children in the home and the religious men [*samaṇabrāhmaṇa*] who provide the moral and spiritual leadership to the entire family, while standing, as it were, outside the pale of the family [ DN.III. p.188f.]

In the Sigāla Sutta, further to this recognition of the services rendered, there are virtually detailed codes of conduct which determine the relationship in which one party stands to the other. **The relationship is respectfully reciprocal and does not make one subservient to another.** As in the Kūṭadanta Sutta, in the Sigāla Sutta too, stimulative measures are further recommended, thus building up a healthy morale within the work-community, not only in those directly employed but also in those connected with the workmen in diverse relationships **such as a workman's spouse and offspring.**

By now it should clear to us that a point which is reiterated in Buddhist teachings is that man must hold man in complete respect, that being the very spirit of the concept of *mettā* or *maitrī*, i.e. unbounded love or loving kindness. It also implies that no one should do anything that jeopardises or undermines the interests of the other, [...*parabyābādhāya samvatteyya* at MN.I.p.416 Ambalaṭṭhikā Rāhulovāda Sutta], that he must not deprive another of what legitimately belongs to him [... *parassa paravittūpakaraṇam* ... MN.I. p.257 ]. For it is indicated that a man's possessions form the basis of his happiness [*Paravittūpakaraṇan'ti tass'eva parassa vittūpakaranam tuṭṭhijananam parikkhārabhaṇḍakam*. MA.II. p.329. Commentary to the Sāleyyaka Sutta at MN.I. p.285 f ].

Let me now elaborate for your benefit some of the theses formulated by the Buddhists on this issue. Utilisation of manpower resources immediately implies employment of some sort, either by an employer or as self-employment. An employer comes in two categories, either as state or private sector. Leaving self-employment to be organised and stabilised through self-regulation, the question of employer - employee relationships where two groups or individuals are involved are thoroughly dealt with in these Buddhist sources. They had several major reasons for taking upon themselves this task. A well-regulated system of human relationships was deemed necessary at all levels for social harmony, peace and prosperity. On the side of economic development where greater productivity resulting from efficient administration of work was necessary, it was vital that every unit of the working community was smoothly integrated. This, it was realised on the other hand, was possible only where people derived the maximum or at least the optimum happiness in life that they choose to enjoy. This is what makes them happy and comfortable. Buddhist texts use two valuable words in these contexts, namely *sukhetti* - comforts and *pīṇeti* - pleases or satisfies. As we now examine the Buddhist stand with regard to employer-employee relationships we will discover how much these two concepts loom large in the minds of those who formulated the policies. The policies as laid down in the Kūṭadanta Sutta quoted above embrace three major areas.

1. Job-satisfaction for the employee and the maximum utilisation of skills and aptitudes from the point of view of the employer.
2. Adequate remuneration for work done and recognition of service rendered.
3. Sensitivity to the physical and emotional needs of the employee.

Under the consideration of job satisfaction the Kūṭadanta Sutta which envisages the State as the employer notes that people should be employed according to competence and aptitude. Several avenues of employment like agriculture, trade, public administration are mentioned and the assignment and

appointment is to be according to each one's choice, literally in the avenue in which they persevere or are competent in : *ussahati*. Contentment among the employees and consequent productivity in the work sector is envisaged. As further stimuli to this it is suggested that all workmen [excepting those engaged in trade in this context] are to be provided with meals daily [*devasikaṃ bhattaṃ*] at their work place in addition to their regular monthly wages [*māsikam paribbayaṃ*]. This was a must and had to be arranged to suit the workers' convenience. It had to be more than a mere frugal meal. Special meals or delicacies had to be even occasionally introduced. Literary evidence shows that this was no mere injunction confined to the theoretical tradition of the books. In the Mahāvamsa [ Ch.50. vv.18-21]. it is stated that during the construction of the Mahāthūpa at Anurādhapura, i.e. Ruvanvelisaya, King Duṭṭu Gemunu provided four canteens at the four gates for the benefit of the workmen which carried in their stocks, in addition to items of food and drink, "many garments, different ornaments, fragrant flowers, sugar as well as the five perfumes for the mouth". Mark well the King's wish, while providing these facilities.

"Let them take of these as they will when they have laboured as they will". Observing this command the King's work-people allotted [the wages].

Quite unwittingly, while commenting on Duṭṭu Gemunu's policy, we have now come to the second point indicated above, viz. adequate remuneration or wages. Before proceeding further let me stress here again that the provision of food for workmen is in addition to the regular wages. The word used is *bhatta* + *vetana* [ *bhatta* = food, *vetana* = wages ].

This is the sense in which it is used in the early Buddhist texts, in the historical tradition associated with Duṭṭu Gemunu and in the Commentaries of Venerable Buddhaghosa. But it is unfortunate that the intellectual giants of Sri Lanka of more recent years have slipped off from their pedestals and interpreted this as wages for food [ Sinh. *bat sandahā vaṭṭup* ]. This tended to take away from the mind of the employer his obligation to provide food for his workmen and from

the employee the basis for a legitimate demand which was supported by the cultural tradition of the land. What a national calamity and what a breach in the growth of a healthy socialist outlook.

Let us now proceed to examine our last item on the list, i.e. the employer's sensitivity to the physical and emotional needs of the employee. It is indicated as a first requirement that work should be allocated judging the physical fitness and capacity of the workers, lighter work being assigned to women and junior workers. Medical care in case of illness is specifically mentioned. On the emotional side, several specific items mentioned reveal the need on the part of the employer to win the good will of his employees. Luxury items of food like delicacies are to be offered to workmen from time to time. Provision is also to be made to make gifts of clothing and ornaments, during festival seasons, in addition to the bonuses paid regularly on this account. Thus a vast fund of good will is being built which more than sustains, without any interruption, the ventures undertaken by the employer, State or otherwise, it also nurtures such a vital spirit of comradeship between the two groups completely eliminating noisy slogans about exploitation.

Special mention is made in Buddhist texts of the just uses of the contribution an employer makes to elevate the quality of life of his workmen and to give them the optimum happiness they expect as an integral part of decent living. (*sukhenti pīrenti*) in recognition of the service they have rendered to him in the production of his wealth. The Anguttara Nikāya [AN.III.77 and also 45] in a very comprehensive survey of money and its meaningful use, mentions both those employed at domestic level (*dāsa-kammakāraporisā*) as well as those in larger agricultural and industrial concerns (*khetta-kammanta-sāmanta-samvohāra*).

Finally, one glance at the Sigāla Sutta. This is essentially a code of layman's ethics for social harmony, domestic happiness and economic well-being. The heights of culture to which it can elevate a man of any society is not at all adequately appreciated. That it speaks in no uncertain terms of regulated hours

of work and overtime payment is hardly known. In the process of translation its treasures are buried under the earth brought up in the process of digging [See Dialogues of the Buddha - Rhys Davids Vol.III.p.182]. This sutta which calls upon the householder to put the house in order under one family unit, extends this process of regularisation, linking one family with another, thus having no single individual in the community who is not related to the entire larger complex in some definite wholesome way. Through this process every one is respected, generously and genuinely rewarded, for the services rendered in the interest of the human community. It is for this reason that the sutta is called the Salutation to all Directions: *disā namassana*.

Thus in the teachings of the Buddha, delivered to the world more than two and a half millennia ago, one discovers a wealth of information which can be utilised to guide the destinies of man, without any foreign aid from east or west, above or below, through a sheer policy of human magnanimity and humanitarian considerations evolved through honesty and love.

Venerable Professor Dhammavihārī  
Dharmāyatanaya  
Maharagama  
Sri Lanka

## **(5) Buddhism and Beauty**

Ven Professor Dhammavihari

**W**ith the doctrine of *tilakkhaṇa* or *anicca dukkha anatta*, i.e. impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness in the forefront, is it possible to speak of a concept of beauty in Buddhism ? Has it not often been suggested that Buddhism is a religion of pessimism and that with its doctrine of renunciation Buddhism would have very little to do with notions of beauty? Although these remarks may

at first appear to be very convincing, they are in fact far from the truth and are no more than mistaken generalisations. Let us first examine the doctrine of the three aforesaid characteristics or signata of existence [impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and selflessness]. This, the Buddha taught his first five disciples and is recorded in the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta [Vin.I. pp.13-14] as follows: ` This body of ours [*rūpa*], O Bhikkhus, is not the self [ *attā* ]. If the body, O Bhikkhus, were the self, the body would not be subject to disease and we should be able to say: `Let my body be such and such a one, let my body not be such and such a one'. But since this body, O Bhikkhus, is not the self, therefore the body is subject to disease, and we are not able to say `Let my body be such and such a one, let my body not be such and such a one.' And he further said: `Now what do you think, O Bhikkhus, is this body of ours permanent or perishable'? `It is perishable, Lord'. `And that which is perishable, does that cause pain or joy'? `It causes pain, Lord'. `And that which is perishable, painful, subject to change, is it possible to regard that in this way: ` This is mine, this am I, this is my self'? `That is impossible, Lord'.

In this manner the Buddha admitted the presence of unsatisfactoriness or suffering in the world, and by a method of analysis he pointed out to his disciples that attachment to things, without a correct view as to their true nature, was the cause of this suffering. Impermanence and change are inherent in the nature of all things. This is their true nature [*yathābhucca*] and to know it as such is the correct view, and as long as we are at variance with it [*yathābhuccaṃ ajānantā*] we are bound to run into conflicts. We cannot alter or control the nature of things. If we attempted to do so, the result then would be `Hope deferred maketh the heart sick'. The only solution to this lies in correcting our own point of view. The Buddha has declared that the thirst for things, no matter what they are, begets sorrow : *taṇhāya jāyati soko*. When we like persons or things, we wish that they belonged to us and were with us for ever. Consciously or unconsciously, we wish for permanency of possession. We do not stop to think about their true nature or in our great enthusiasm refuse to think about their true nature.



We do not wish to entertain in our minds such concepts like loss, separation and destruction. We expect things and persons to survive time. But time devours everything [*kālo ghasati bhūtānā*]. Youth must yield to old age and the freshness of the morning dew disappears before the rising sun. Both are expressions of the natural law of change. When the Buddha lay in his death-bed at Kuṣiṇārā, his disciple and close attendant Ānanda, who had not yet gained true insight and become an arahant, was unable to bear the grief on hearing about the imminent death of his master. So the Buddha, in his admonition to weeping Ananda, whom he had promptly summoned, said: 'Grieve not, O Ānanda, lament not. Have I not already told you that from all good things we love and cherish, we would be separated, sooner or later. That they would change their nature and perish in their own way. How then can the Tathāgata not pass away? That is not possible.' [DN.II. p.118]

This is the philosophy which underlies the doctrine of *tilakkhaṇa* or the Buddhist view of life and the world. All Buddhist values are based on this. The **Buddha expected of his disciples, both laity and clergy, good conduct and good behaviour and decent standards of living in every way.** He never lost sight of the fact **that they had a part to play in both religion and society.** With him, **plain living did not amount to degenerate human existence.** The Dhammacetiya Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya [MN.II. p.118.ff.] clearly expresses what the saner men of good judgement thought of ascetic life as it was practised in India at the time. Thus said King Pasenadī of Kosala: 'There I see recluses and Brahmins become emaciated and lean, discoloured and looking very pale. The veins have become visible all over their bodies. People will not be delighted to see them, I fear'.

In the Pāli original of this, there is a phrase which is of interest to us: '*na cakkhum bandhanti janassa dassanāya*.' This means that they do not catch the eye of the onlooker. Here, we have one definite notion of beauty. An object of beauty is something which we are pleased to see. Hence, we get the term *pāsādika* [pleasant or pleasing to look at] used over and over again with

reference to the dress and demeanour of the Buddhist monk. Of personal cleanliness, decency and decorum, the Buddha spoke in praise, not only for their own sake but also because of their social implications. Among the regulations governing the monastic life in Buddhism there are many instructions which bear testimony to this. Healthy living has been the *sine qua non* of Buddhism.

*Ārogyaparamā lābhā* [Dhp. v. 204] or freedom from disease, the Buddha said, is the greatest gain. This attitude, in addition to safeguarding the general health of a people, also resulted in creating an environment which is aesthetically pleasing. And the following passage from the Mahāvagga of the Vinayaṭṭaka clearly illustrates that the simple life which the Buddha advocated was not without standards.

'If there are cobwebs in the *vihāra* or the place of residence, let him remove them as soon as he sees them. Let him wipe off the casements and corners of the room. If a wall which is coated with red chalk is dirty, let him moisten the mop, wring it out, and scour the wall. If the floor is coated black and is dirty, let him moisten the mop, wring it out, and scour the floor. If the floor is not blackened let him sprinkle it with water and scrub it in order that the *vihāra* may not become dusty. Let him heap up the sweepings and cast them aside. Let him bask the carpet in the sun, clean it, dust it by beating, take it back, and spread it out as it was spread before' [Vin.I.48].

Thus we see that the Buddha was no ascetic who attempted to elevate the soul by resorting to forms of conduct which are repulsive and debasing. But beauty, the Buddha maintained, if one does not understand the true nature of objects of beauty, may lead to grief and disappointment. It distorts values and upsets the standards of judgement. When beauty is limited to persons and things, greed and pride are the lot of those who possess them. If such things are not common and are not easily obtained, a man may be called upon to engage himself in eternal struggle to safeguard his exclusive possessions. On the other hand, those who have set unlimited values on their coveted objects of beauty but

are not fortunate enough to possess them, will need great strength and courage to resist their feelings of jealousy and enmity towards those who have the good fortune to possess them. Here we are reminded of the story of Venerable Pakkha in the Theragāthā [Thag. v.63]. One day, going to the village for alms, he sat down beneath a tree. Then a kite, seizing some flesh flew up into the sky. Him, many kites attacked, making him drop the meat. Another kite grabbed the fallen flesh, and was plundered by yet another. And the bhikkhu thought to himself: 'Just like that meat are worldly desires, common to all, full of pain and woe'. And reflecting thereon, and realising how they were impermanent he resolved to carry out his mission in full. He sat down for his afternoon rest, and expanding insight won arahantship.

It becomes clearly evident from these that the Buddhist does not avoid objects of beauty nor does he run away from them. He only refrains from making them the basis for strong and individuated likes and dislikes. Whatever there is in the world, pleasant and loveable, we are attached to them, and we develop a dislike towards their opposites. Placed in this philosophical setting, the Buddhist recognises beauty where the senses can perceive it. But in beauty he also sees its own change and destruction. He remembers what the Buddha said with regard to all component things, that they come into being, undergo change and are destroyed. Therefore the wise man acquires a greater depth of vision. His admiration is not coloured by a greed for acquisition and possession. The disciples of the Buddha understood this and proved it in their own lives. There was Venerable Sappaka, who taking from the Buddha an exercise for spiritual culture, went to the Lonagiri Vihāra on the banks of the river Ajakarani. There was beauty all around him and the peace of the place seems to have satisfied him so much that after his enlightenment he decided to make it his permanent abode. We see his heart filled with joy as he describes the beauty of the place. But note what a remarkable sense of detachment he yet displays.

When I see the crane, her clear bright wings

Outstretched in fear to flee the black storm cloud,  
A shelter seeking, to safe shelter borne,  
Then doth the river Ajakarani give joy to me.  
Who doth not love to see on either bank  
Clustered rose apple trees in fairy array  
Behind the great cave of my hermitage  
Or here the soft croak of the frogs, well rid  
Of their undying mortal foes proclaim:  
Not from the mountain streams isn't time today  
To flit. Safe is the Ajakarani.  
She brings us luck. Here is it good to be.

Thag. vv.307-310

In the enjoyment of beauty Sappaka is not agitated. What needs ruffle him and disturb his peace? There is nothing that he is in danger of losing and nothing that he needs to possess and jealously guard.

Herein the mind is freed from pettiness and strife, and therein man finds contentment and rest. Kassapa, the Great, reiterates the same with great conviction when he says:

Those upland glades delightful to the soul  
Where the Kareri spreads its wildering wreaths,  
Where sound the trumpet-calls of elephants:  
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.  
Those rocky heights with hue of dark blue clouds,  
Where lies embosomed many a shining tarn  
Of crystal clear, cool waters. and where slopes  
The 'herds of Indra' cover and bedeck:  
Here is enough for me who fain would dwell  
In meditation rapt, mindful and tense.

Thag. vv.1067f.

And as we have already stated earlier, the Buddhist does not build a wall around himself to shut out the world of sense experience. He remains within it. Does not Thera Kāludāyī who describes the beauty of the season speak like a poet or an artist?

Now crimson glow the trees, dear Lord, and cast  
Their ancient foliage in quest of fruit.  
Like crests of flame they shine irradiant,  
And rich in hope, great Hero, is the hour.  
Verdure and blossom-time in every tree,  
Where we look delightful to the eye,  
And every quarter breathing fragrant airs,  
While petals falling, yearning comes for fruit.

Thag. vv.527f.

In him, it is not a mere passive eye that only records what is seen which is at work but also a heart that responds and reacts. But our Thera Kāludāyī does so with understanding and judgement. And this philosophical attitude of the Buddhist to beauty may best be summed up in the following words of the Japanese poet who sang:

"On Mount Yoshino each returning year,  
How beautiful the cherries blossom gay.  
Split the tree open wide and then draw near,  
Tell me where is the flower now, I pray".

Toshigoto ni Sakuya  
Yoshino no Yamasakura  
Kiyo harite miyo  
Hana no arita vo

This is the philosophy of change and continuity. And in it, fail not to see beauty which can for ever be to man an unending source of inspiring joy.

Venerable Professor Dhammavīhārī  
Dharmāyatanaya  
Maharagama  
Sri Lanka

## (6) Woman within the Religious Frame of Buddhism

At the time the Buddha set up his Order of Bhikkhus, there was in Indian society the widespread but groundless belief that woman is inferior to man. The position which the woman lost under the dominance of the Brāhmaṇas had not yet been retrieved. The brahmins of the day evidently showed little sympathy for her sad lot. Altekar describes the position of woman in India at the time as follows: `The prohibition of *upanayana* amounted to spiritual disenfranchisement of women and produced a disastrous effect upon their general position in society. It reduced them to the status of Śūdras ... What, however, did infinite harm to women was the theory that they were ineligible for them (Vedic sacrifices) because they were of the status of the Śūdras. Henceforward they began to be bracketed with Śūdras and other backward classes in society. This we find to be the case even in the Bhagavadgīta IX.32. [C.Altekar, A.S., The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, p.204f]. In the Manusmṛti we witness the cruel infliction of domestic subservience on woman. The road to heaven is barred to her and there is hard bargaining with her for the offer of an alternative route. Matrimony and obedience to the husband are the only means whereby a woman can hope to reach heaven.

*Nāsti strīnām pṛthag yajño na vrataṃ nāpyupoṣaṭhaṃ  
Patim śuśrūṣate yena tena svarge mahīyate.*

Manu.V.153.

`Women have no sacrifices of their own to perform nor religious rites or

observances to follow. Obedience to the husband alone would exalt the woman in heaven.'

This hostile attitude to woman both in religion and in society was repeatedly criticised and challenged by the Buddha on numerous occasions. In the Kosala Samyutta, the Buddha contradicts the belief that the birth of a daughter was not as much a cause of joy as that of a son, a belief which the ritualism of the Brāhmaṇas had contributed to strengthen. The Buddha pointed out clearly that woman had a dignified and an important part to play in society, and he defined it with great insight, fitting her harmoniously into the social fabric. She is a loveable member of the household, held in place by numerous relationships, and respected above all, as the mother of worthy sons. The sex did not matter, he argued, and added that in character and in her role in society, she may even rival men.

*Itthī pi hi ekacchiyā seyyā posā janādhīpa  
medhāvinī sīlavatī sassudevā patibbatā.  
Tassā yo jāyati poso sūro hoti disampati  
evam subhagiyā putto rajjam 'pi anusāsati.*

SN.I.86

`A woman child , O lord of men, may prove  
Even a better offspring than a male.  
For she may grow up wise and virtuous,  
Her husband's mother rev'rencing, true wife.  
The boy that she may bear may do great deeds,  
And rule great realms, yea, such a son  
Of noble wife becomes his country`s guide`.  
Kindred Sayings, I.p.111

But it is not unusual to find scholars who have missed this singular virtue of Buddhism. It would be grossly unfair to say that the Buddha did not devote much

attention to the duties and ideals of lay women or that he showed indifference to or contempt of women. Speaking of Buddhism and Jainism, Altekar unjustly says: 'Both these were ascetic religions, and they have not devoted much attention to the duties and ideals of lay women. The founders and leaders of both these movements showed the indifference to, or contempt of women, which is almost universal among the advocates of the ascetic ideal'.[Altekar, A.S.,op.cit.p.208].

The instances are numerous where the Buddha defines and describes the duties of woman in society [AN.IV.p.265f]. Further, the Buddha recognises the fact that these do not constitute the whole of her life. It is not with a view to limiting their life solely to the secular affairs of the household that the Buddha laid down a code of good living for women, but to serve as a complement to the good life already enjoined in his religion to all his followers, irrespective of their sex. A host of these considerations as they are addressed to women are grouped together in the Samyutta Nikaya in a chapter solely devoted to them [SN.IV.328f]. A good lay woman endowed with religious devotion, moral virtue and liberality as well as wisdom and learning, makes a success of her life in this world. For it is said:

*Saddhāya sīlena ca yīdha vaḍḍhati  
Paññāya cāgena sutena cūbhayaṃ  
Sā tādisī sīlavatī upāsikā  
ādiyati sāraṃ idh'eva attano 'ti.*

SN,IV.250

'Such a virtuous lady who possesses religious devotion, cultivates virtue, is endowed with wisdom and learning and is given to charity makes a success of her life in this very existence.'

Her virtuous character gives to her life in the household poise and dignity [Pañcahi bhikkhave dhammehi samannāgato mātugāmo visārado agāraṃ ajjhāvasati. Katamehi pañcahi ? Pāṇātipātā paṭivirato ca hoti ... surāmeraya-



*majjapamādaṭṭhānā paṭivirato ca hoti.* SN.IV 250]. The following are also given as virtues by means of which she can make her life fruitful, both here and hereafter: *Saddho* (religious devotion), *hirimā ottappī* (sense of shame and fear), *īakkodhano anupanāhi* (not given to anger), *anissuki* (not jealous), *amaccharī* (not niggardly), *anaticārī* (chaste in behaviour), *sīlavā* (virtuous), *bahussuto* (learned), *Āraddhaviriyo* (zealous), *upaṭṭhitassatī* (mentally alert), *paññavā* or wise [Ibid.243-44].. We notice that all these virtues enumerated so far are within the reach of a woman living in the household. She is not rooted out of her domestic setting. The good and successful life of the laywoman, as much as of the layman, seems to have loomed large in the ethics of Buddhism. In the Anguttara Nikāya two sets of virtues are given whereby a woman is said to strive for success in this world as well as in the other: *idhalokavijaya* and *paralokavijaya* [*Catūhi kho Visākha dhammehi samannāgato mātugāmo idhalokavijayāya paṭipanno hoti ayam sa loko Āraddho hoti. Katamehi catūhi ? Idha Visākha mātugāmo susṃvihita-kammanto hoti saṃgahitaparijano bhattu manāpaṃ caratī sambhatam anurakkhati ... Catūhi kho Visākha dhammehi samannāgato mātugmo paralokavijāyaya paṭipanno hoti parassa loko araddho hoti. Katamehi catūhi ? Idha Visākha mātugāmo saddhāsampanno hoti sīlasampanno hoti cāgasampanno hoti paññāsampanno hoti-* AN. IV. 269f.]..

It is also worth noting here that the Buddha accepts the reality and significance of the institution of marriage for woman. But, unlike in Hindu society, it was not the only means for the social elevation of woman. In Hinduism, a woman is supposed to become a **dvija**, a truly initiated member of the religion and the society, only after her marriage [ Prabhu, Hindu Social Organisation, p.284].

The virtues referred to in the Anguttara Nikāya (AN.IV.269f.) are household duties of a woman as wife which lead to domestic peace and concord. They are also calculated to keep the family administration in gear and secure for the family economic stability. This significant part which she is called upon to play is

meticulously defined and it reveals neither indifference to nor contempt of women on the part of the Buddha.

The good laywoman has also her duties for the development of her religious life. It is a course of graduated training which does not conflict with her household life. It is, in fact, smoothly woven into it. Religious devotion (*saddhā*), moral virtue (*sīla*), and a generous disposition (*cāga*), for instance, form part of it. This healthy combination of social and religious virtues of woman is further witnessed in the Anguttara Nikāya where it is said that the following eight virtues pave the way for her to proceed to heaven.

*Susamvihitakammantā saṃgahitaparijjanā  
Bhṭu manāpaṃ carati sambhatam anurakkhati.  
Saddhāsīlena sampannā vadaññū vītamaccharī  
Niccamaṃ maggaṃ visodheti sotthānam samparāyikam.  
Iccete aṭṭhadhammā ca yassa vijjati nāriyā  
tam pi sīlavatim āhu dhammaṭṭhaṃ saccavādinīṃ.  
Solasākārasampannā aṭṭhaṅgasusamāgatā  
tādisī sīlavatī upāsikā upapajjati devalokam manāpam.*

AN.IV.271

They are:

1. organises the work of the household with efficiency,
2. treats her servants with concern,
3. strives to please her husband,
4. takes good care of what he earns,
5. possesses religious devotion,
6. is virtuous in conduct,
7. is kind,
8. is liberal.

The first four items of this list are identical with the first four of the five good

qualities ascribed to the virtuous wife in the Siṅgālovāda Sutta, the fifth being general efficiency (*dakkhā*) and enterprise (*anālasā sabbakiccesu*) at DN.III.p.190.

It was also held in Indian belief that woman was intellectually inferior to man and therefore had no capacity to reach higher spiritual attainments. This idea clearly echoes in the Samyutta Nikāya where Mara, as the personification of the forces of evil, strives in vain to dissuade a Bhikkhuni from her religious endeavours.

*Yaṃ tam isihi pattaḃbam thānaṃ durabhisambhavaṃ  
na taṃ dvaṅgulapaññāya skkā pappotum itthiyā.*

SN.I.129.

‘No woman, with the two-finger-wisdom which is hers, could ever hope to reach those heights which are attained only by the sages.’

These words of Māra are undoubtedly resonant of the beliefs of the day and the Buddha was vehement in contradicting them. Bhikkhuni Somā to whom Mara addressed these words answered. Illustrating the Buddhist attitude to the spiritual potentialities of woman she said:

*Itthibhāvo kiṃ kayirā cittaṃhi susamāhite  
Ñāṇaṃhi vattaṃāṇaṃhi sammā dhammaṃ vipassato.*

SN.I.129

‘When one’s mind is well concentrated and wisdom never fails, does the fact of being a woman make any difference’ ?

However, there is evidence that this age-old scepticism about the spiritual potentialities of woman died hard. Even in the face of success achieved by Bhikkhunis in Buddhism, a groundless belief seems to have prevailed which distrusted the capacity of woman for spiritual perfection. On the eve of her final passing away, when Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī visits the Buddha to bid him farewell, he calls upon her to give proof of the possible religious attainments of the

Bhikkhunis in order to convince the disbelieving sceptics, the men in society.

*Thīnaṃ dhammābhisamaye ye bālā vimatiṃ gatā  
Tesaṃ diṭṭhipahānattham iddhiṃ dassehi Gotamī.*

Ap.II.535

‘O Gotami, perform a miracle in order to dispel the wrong views of those foolish men who are in doubt with regard to the spiritual potentialities of woman.’

Buddhism, with its characteristic note of realism, also recognises the inherent qualities of woman which make her attractive to the opposite sex. Nothing else in the world, it is said, can delight and cheer a man so much as a woman. In her, one would find all the fivefold pleasures of the senses. The world of pleasure exists in her.

*Pañcākāmaguṇā ete itthirūpasmīṃ dissare  
rūpā saddā rasā gandhā phoṭṭhabbā ca manoramā.*

AN.III.69

‘All these five-fold pleasures of the senses which gratify the mind are centered in the feminine form.’

The power which the woman derives through this may, at the same time, extend so far as to make man throw all reason to the winds and be a pawn in her hand, under the influence of her charm. Thus, it is even possible that a mother may err in relation to her son or vice versa.

*Kin nu so bhikkhave moghapuriso maññati na mātā putte sārājati putto va  
pana mātari ‘ti. [AN.III.68].*

‘What, O monks, does that foolish man think that a mother would not feel lustfully attached to her son or the son to his mother.’ See Gradual Sayings, III. p.55 for a different translation of this passage which we consider to be incorrect.

*Nāham bhikkhave aññam ekarūpam ‘pi samanupassāmi evaṃ rajanīyam*

*evam kamanīyam evam madanīyam evam bandhanīyam evam mucchanīyam  
evam antarāyakaram anuttarassa yogakkhemassa adhigamāya yathayidam  
bhikkhave itthirūpam. Itthirūpe bhikkhave sattā rattā giddhā gadhitā mucchitā  
ajjhoppānā te dīgharattam socanti itthirūpa-vasānugā. [AN.III.68].*

Therefore a man might say without exaggeration that woman is a trap laid out on all sides by Māra [*Yam hi tam bhikkhave sammā vadamāno vadeyya samantapāso mārassā ti mātugāmam yeva sammā vadamāno vadeyya samantapāso mārassā ti. Ibid*]. These observations are made, however, not as a stricture on their character but as a warning to the men, who in seeking their company, might err on the side of excess. It is true that at times they tend to be over-stressed, but obviously with no malice to women. There is pointed reference to the unguarded nature of the man who falls a prey to these feminine charms.

*Muṭṭhassatiṃ tā bandhanti pekkhitena mhitena ca  
atho pi dunnivatthena mañjunā bhaṇitena ca  
n'eso jano svāsaddo api ugghātito mato.*

AN.III.69

`Women ensnare a man of heedless mind with their glances and smiles or with artful grooming (*dunnivattha*) and pleasing words. Women are such that one cannot approach them in safety even though they may be stricken and dead' [G.S.III.57]

Thus it becomes clear that it is not in the spirit of Buddhism to brand woman as a source of corruption for man. Note the words `**a man of heedless mind**' in the above quotation. It would be interesting to contrast here the words of Manu who says, `It is the nature of woman to seduce men in this world': *Svabhāva eva nārīnam narānām iha dūṣaṇam*- Manu.II.213. The Jains too, inspite of their admission of women into the Monastic Order, do not seem to have differed very much from the Brahmins in their attitude towards women. The Ācāraṅga Sūtra, in the course of a religious admonition known as the Pillow of Righteousness, makes the following comment which stigmatises woman completely: `He to

whom women were known as the causes of all sinful acts, he saw the true state of the world.[Jaina Sūtras I. SBE.XXII. p.81]. The position of woman in Jainism is summed up as follows: "Right in the earliest portions of the Canon woman is looked upon as something evil that enticed innocent males into a snare of misery. They are described as 'the greatest temptation', 'the causes of all sinful acts'. 'the slough', 'demons' etc. Their bad qualities are described in exaggerated terms. Their passions are said to destroy the celibacy of monks 'like a pot filled with lac near fire'." [Deo.S.B.,History or Jaina Monachism. p.493]. In Buddhism, on the other hand, the caution which men are called upon to exercise in their dealings with the opposite sex springs solely from the Buddhist attitude to *kāma* or the pleasures of the senses. *Kāma* are described in Buddhism as leading to grief and turbulence. *Kāma* thwart the path to transcendental happiness. This attitude is eloquently manifest in the counsel given to Ariṭṭha in the Alagaddūpama Sutta. [MN. I.130].

Of this vast field of sense experience of man, sex is only a segment but it is admittedly one with irresistible appeal and thus required a special word of warning, particularly to those who are keen on the pursuit of mental equipoise. The Buddha says that if it were left unbridled, it would, in expressing itself, shatter all bounds of propriety [*Kin nu so bhikkhave moghapuriso maññati na mātā putte sārājati putto vā pana mātari 'ti.* AN.III.68].

Hence the desire to lead a chaste and moral life, eschewing, even completely, the gratification of sex desires, can as much be the aspiration of a woman as of a man. Besides this philosophic attitude to the pleasures of the world in which the woman admittedly plays a dominant part, there seems to be nothing in Buddhism which looks upon sex or woman as being corrupt in themselves.

Thus it becomes clear that the philosophy of early Buddhism had no reservations whatsoever regarding the spiritual emancipation of woman. In the ocean of samsāra her chances of swimming across to the further shore were as

good as those of man. Emancipation of the mind through perfection of wisdom which is referred to as *cetovimutti paññāvimutti* was the goal of religious life and for this the way which had proved most effective was the life of renunciation. The woman was as much encumbered by household life as man and in her spiritual earnestness she would have equally well echoed the words of the man who chooses renunciation. She would say with him that the household life is full of impediments and contrast it with the life of *pabbajjā* [*Sambādho gharāvāso rajopātho abbhokāso pabbajjā*. MN.I.179].

But according to the evidence of the Pali texts [AN.IV.274 ; Vin.II.253] the admission of women into the life of *pabbajjā* in Buddhism does not seem to have been effected with as much ease as one would expect. According to these, the Buddha appears to have shown some reluctance to admit women into the Order. When Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī requested the Buddha to consent to the entry of women into his Order he is said to have put her off three times, saying: 'Do not be interested O, Gotamī, about the entry of women into my Order'[ Ibid.]. This does seem to imply that the presence of women in the monastic institution of brahmachariya was considered, for some reason or other, to be detrimental to its well-being. In an atmosphere where women were considered a danger to spiritual life, their presence in the inner circle of religious life as members of the monastic community would have naturally called for serious comment. However, there is evidence that Jainism had already broken through this barrier against women. But the vicissitudes of the Jain monastic community, in the relations between the two orders of monks and nuns, as well as of nuns and laymen, could not apparently have been very heartening to the Buddha. Speaking of the reforms introduced by Mahāvīra with the addition of the fifth vow of chastity to the earlier cauryāma samvara of Pārśva, Jacobi says, 'The argumentation in the text presupposes a decay of morals of the monastic order to have occurred between Pārśva and Mahāvīra...' [Jaina Sūtras.II.SBE.XLV.122 n.3]. There is also evidence from another quarter of the promiscuity in the behaviour of male and female mendicants in the Buddha's day. The Buddha takes note of this in the

Culladhammasamādāna Sutta [ MN. I.305].

He speaks of Samanas and Brahmanas who repudiating the view that sensual pleasures are detrimental to spiritual progress, mingle freely with female mendicants, vociferously enjoying their company. They are reported as saying:

‘Whatever can be the basis for pleading for the renunciation of sensual pleasures? What future calamity can lie in wait for us? Blissful indeed is the contact of the soft and tender hands of these young female mendicants.’ [ Ibid. ]

However, the Buddha concedes to Ananda that women, having taken to the life of *pabbajjā* in Buddhism, are capable of attaining the higher fruits of religious life as far as Arahantship. [*Bhabbo Ānanda mātugamo tathāgatappavedite dhammavinaye agarasmā anagāriyam pabbajitvā sotāpattiphalm 'pi sakadāgamiphalam 'pi anāgāmiphalam 'pi arahattaphalam pi sacchikātun 'ti* AN.IV.276.;Vin.II .254]. The considerations which seem to have weighed heavy in the mind of the Buddha regarding the admission of women into the Order are concerned more with the wider problem of the monastic organization as a whole. He would have been undoubtedly most averse to stand in the way of the personal liberty of woman. But in the interests of the collective good of the institution of brahmacariya, which was the core of the religion, women had to make certain sacrifices, surrendering at times even what might appear to have been their legitimate rights. This is evident from the following eight conditions (atthagarudhammā) under which the Buddha granted them permission to enter the Order.

1. A nun who has been ordained (even) for a hundred years must greet respectfully, rise up from her seat, salute with joined palms, do proper homage to a monk ordained but that day.
2. A nun must not spend the rains in a residence where there are no monks. [See Bhikkhuni Pac.56: Vin.IV.313]
3. Every halfmonth a nun should desire two things from the Order of



monks: the asking [as to the date] of the Observance day, and the coming for the exhortation. [See Bhikkhuni Pac.59: Ibid. 315].

4. After the rains a nun must 'invite' before both Orders in respect of three matters: what was seen, what was heard, what was suspected. [See Bhikkhuni Pac. 57: Ibid.314].
5. A nun, offending against an important rule, must undergo m $\bar{L}$ natta (discipline) for half a month before both Orders.
6. When, as a probationer, she has trained in the six rules for two years, she should seek higher ordination from both Orders.
7. A Monk must not be abused or reviled in any way by a nun.
8. From today admonition of monks by nuns is forbidden, admonition of nuns by monks is not forbidden.

Book of the Discipline, V.354-55

The insistence on these **a $\bar{t}$ thagarudhammā** is the most vital issue, much more than the delayed consent of the Buddha, in the founding of the Bhikkhuni Sāsana. The delay, it may in fact be argued, would have proved useful to emphasise the conditions which he was going to lay down. It is these conditions alone which gave the women access to the monastic life in Buddhism [*Sace Ananda Mahāpajāpati Gotami a $\bar{t}$ thagarudhamme paṭigaṇhāti sā va'ssā hotu upasampadā*- Vin.II.255.] The Dharmagupta Vinaya in the Chinese version compares them to a bridge over a great river by means of which one is enabled to cross over to the further bank [Taisho, Vol.22.p.923 B.]. These *garudhammā* are observances which pertain to monastic propriety and procedure in the Order of Bhikkhunis in relation to the Bhikkhus. The women are not to violate these as long as they remain in the monastic community.

In the establishment of the Bhikkhunī Sāsana, these conditions seem to have engaged greater attention than even the formulation of the code of moral precepts, which incidentally is not even mentioned at this stage. There is no doubt that in maintaining the vigour and vitality of the Sangha, whether of the

Bhikkhus or of the Bhikkhunis, the code of the Patimokkha played a vital part. But it seems to be equally true to say that in bringing the newly inaugurated Bhikkhunī Saṅgha into a healthy relationship with the older institution of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha, the aṭṭhagarudhammā were calculated to play a greater role. They take no note of moral considerations. A perfect functioning of the latter, in the case of the Bhikkhunis too, was apparently taken for granted at this early stage of their Sāsana. That a similar state of affairs did exist even in the Bhikkhu Saṅgha in its early history is evident in the Kakacūpama Sutta [MN.I.124].

On a closer examination of the *aṭṭhagarudhammā* we are led to make the following observations. According to these the Bhikkhu Saṅgha is looked upon as the more mature and responsible body, evidently on account of its seniority in origin, which is capable of leading the way for the Bhikkhuni Saṅgha. This is clearly evident from the *garudhammas* 2 and 3 [Vin.II.255]. The Bhikkhunīs are expected to recognise the spiritual leadership of the Order of Bhikkhus. At least at the outset, the Bhikkhunis had to seek the assistance of the Bhikkhus in such vital monastic rituals like the *Pātimokkhuḍḍesa* and *Bhikkhunovāda*. But it is also evident that, as circumstances necessitated and experience proved opportune, the Buddha did transfer some of these powers to the Bhikkhunis themselves [Ibid.259]. However, the recognition of the leadership of the monks over the community of nuns and this position of the Bhikkhus *in loco parentis* to the Bhikkhunīs seem to have continued much longer. Even when the authority to recite the Pātimokkha by themselves was finally transferred to the Bhikkhunis, the Bhikkhus were still left with the right to instruct them on its proper performance [*Anujānāmi bhikkhave bhikkhūhi bhikkhunīnam ācikkhitum evam pātimokkham uddiseyyāthā ' ti. Vin.II.259*].

There is also evidence of a similar reservation of power in the transference of authority to the Bhikkhunis to impose penalties and punishments on their fellow members. The Bhikkhus who carried out these acts at the outset are latterly barred from doing so and are authorised only to explain to the Bhikkhunis the

proper procedure. [*Anujānāmi bhikkhave bhikkhūhi bhikkhunīnam ācikkhitum evaṃ kammaṃ kareyyāthā 'ti.* Vin.II.260]. In the matter of ***bhikkhunovāda*** too, it was a Bhikkhu who was appointed to remind the Bhikkhunis regularly of the proper observance of the *aṭṭhagarudhammā*. [Vin.IV.51.f]. Thus on account of this complete dependence of a bhikkhuni on the leadership of a bhikkhu the second of these eight *garudhammā* forbade the bhikkhunis from going into residence for the rains-retreat in a place where there were no Bhikkhus. The third *garudhamma* too, implies the reliance of the bhikkhunīs on the Order of Bhikkhus in the performance of the two functions of ***uposathapucchaka*** and ***ovādūpasamkamana***. Both the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunīs seem to have been vigilant about the proper observance of these functions which they considered, no doubt, to be vital for the healthy progress of the newly established Order of nuns. At the first sign of slackness with regard to these there is a storm of protests and we notice that the authorities take immediate action to remedy it.

These considerations are brought within the legal framework of the Bhikkhunā Sāsana and the failure to observe these come to be declared punishable offences [Ibid.313,315. See Bhikkhunā Pācittiya 56,59]. In other words they become part of the Bhikkhunā Pātimokkha. In the study of the sikkhapadas of the Bhikkhu Pātimokkha we have already noted this interesting phenomenon of the change over into legal statutes of what was once observed as honoured conventions.

The ***garudhammā*** 4,5 and 6 concern themselves with some of the other major items of administration in the Buddhist monastic community, viz.(i) the performance of the pavāraṇṇā at the end of the rains retreat, (ii) the imposition of necessary penalties on the commission of a grave offence, and (iii) the conferment of *upasampadā* or higher monastic status. As far as the Bhikkhunīs are concerned, they are barred under these *garudhammā* from performing any of these acts within their own Order of the Bhikkhuni Saṅgha. These acts of the Bhikkhunīs are not considered valid unless they are carried out jointly together

with the monks. However, practical considerations soon necessitated amendments to these and we see in the revised version of these conditions the sanction given to the bhikkhunīs to perform these acts, in the first instance, by themselves. Then they are expected to bring their decisions before the Bhikkhu Saṅgha for ratification. The following is the amended procedure for the conferment of *upasampadā* on a āBhikkhuni by the Bhikkhu Saṅgha: *anujānāmi bhikkhave ekato upasampannāya bhikkhunīsaṅghe visuddhāya bhikkhusaṅghe upasampadan 'ti*. [ Vin.II. 271,274]. It shows that the candidate had been already approved by the Bhikkhuni Saṅgha. The Bhikkhunis were also allowed to perform their *pavarāṇā* in two stages before the two assemblies. first among themselves and then before the Bhikkhu Saṅgha [*Anujānāmi bhikkhave ajjatanā pavāretvā aparajju bhikkhusaṅghe pavāretun 'ti*. Ibid.275].

Thus, from the manner in which the Buddha directed the activities of the Bhikkhunīs it becomes clear that he did realise that as the Bhikkhunīs formed a part of the single body of the Saṅgha, their decisions would affect not only themselves, but also the rest of that vast organization. Hence the Bhikkhus were given the right to advise and assist the Bhikkhunīs in their affairs, and thus regulate the destinies of the Sāsana. Public opinion must have played a considerable part in bringing Bhikkhunīs under the wing of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha. At any rate, it appears to have been considered wise to have all the important monastic activities of the Bhikkhunis linked up with the more established and senior group of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha. However, when and wherever this advisory role had to be transferred from the collective organization of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha to a single individual, the Buddha took every necessary precaution to avoid possible abuse of privilege.

He has laid down a very comprehensive list of eight requirements which should be satisfied before a monk could be selected to the role of a *bhikkhunovādaka* to give counsel to the congregation of nuns. There seems to be little doubt about his anxiety and his foresight regarding the safety and well-

being of the female members of his Order. A monk who is entrusted to preside over their welfare should conform to perfect standards of moral virtue. He should also possess a thorough knowledge of the teaching of the Master and know well the complete code of the Pātimokkha covering both the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunīs. He should be of pleasant disposition, mature in years and acceptable to the Bhikkhunīs, and above all, should in no way have been involved in a serious offence with a Bhikkhuni [Vin.IV.51].

The three remaining *garudhammā* 1,7 and 8, appear to have baffled some students of Buddhism as being contrary to the Buddha's general attitude to women. However, if these are examined carefully in their context, this apparent contradiction becomes less glaring. They all strive to see that the Bhikkhunīs do not, under any circumstance, assert their superiority over the Bhikkhus. We notice that even in the observance of *sikkhāpadas*, the Bhikkhunīs are to follow the lead of the Bhikkhus wherever the *sikkhāpadas* are common to both groups. The Buddha advises the Bhikkhunīs to follow the Bhikkhus in the practice of such *sikkhāpada* [...*yathā bhikkhū sikkhanti tathā tesu sikkhāpadesu sikkhathā' ti*. Vin.II 258]. But referring to the *sikkhāpada* which are peculiar to the Bhikkhunīs, he suggests that they should be followed, as they are laid down, according to the letter of the law [ ...*yathāpaññattesu sikkhāpadesu sikkhathā' ti*. Ibid.258 ]. What seems to follow from these words of instruction to the Bhikkhunīs is that even if there was a difference between the text of the *sikkhāpada* laid down for the Bhikkhus and their practice at the time, the Buddha did not think it wise, for purposes of communal harmony, to leave room for the Bhikkhunīs to be critical of this discrepancy. Such a challenge would have completely undermined the prestige and the authority of the older institution of the Saṅgha, quite out of proportion to any degree of moral good it could bring about by the correction of Bhikkhus by the Bhikkhunīs.

There is evidence to show that the Buddha was always concerned with the esteem in which the public held his monastic organization. Such a consideration

was vital for its existence and prosperity. The first remarks which he made to his erring disciples as he criticised their conduct always pertains to this [ *N'etam mogha purisa appasannānam vā pasādāya pasannānam vā bhiyyobhāvāya*. Vin.I.58; II.2; III.21,45.]. As much as the Buddha wanted his disciples to correct their mistakes and be of faultless conduct he did not want any of them to divulge to any one other than a Bhikkhu or a Bhikkhunī the more serious offences of their fellow members. Such an intimation was allowed only with the approval of the Bhikkhus [ *Yo pana bhikkhu bhikkhussa duṭṭhullam āpattim anupasampannassa āroceyya aññatra bhikkhusammutiya pācittiyaṃ*. Vin.IV.31.]. One who violates this injunction is guilty of a Pācittiya offence [Pac.9]. This provision was undoubtedly made with the best of intentions and should not be misjudged as contributing in any way to the perpetuation of monastic offences. On the other hand, it is in fact repeatedly declared that it is irregular for a monk to conceal intentionally an offence of one member from the rest of the community. Pacittiya 64 of the monks and Pārājika 2 and Sanghādisesa 9 of the nuns are all calculated to avoid such a possibility [Vin.IV.127,216,239]. All these precautions, therefore, seem to be a part of a system of internal security set up by the Buddha in the interest of the monastic organization. They emphasise the Buddha's concern both for the public esteem and for the moral soundness of his Order.

There seems to be a general agreement about the fact that the eight *garudhammā* were laid down by the Buddha as a condition governing the establishment of the Bhikkhunī Sāsana. However, strange as it may seem, after the Bhikkhunī Sāsana was instituted under the leadership of Gotamī, she appears before Ānanda to make the request that the Buddha should remove the first *garudhamma* and allow Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis to pay courtesies to each other according to seniority alone [ibid.257-58]. This is hardly true to the spirit in which Gotamī accepted the *garudhammā* [ibid.255-56]. We are inclined to think that she was here undoubtedly subjected to the pressure of her own group.

This dissentient note which we find recorded in the Cullavagga does not

seem to have found general acceptance elsewhere. Of the Chinese Vinaya texts it is only the Mahīśāsakas who record it and that too with a different emphasis [Taisho. Vol.22 p.186 A]. According to their text Gotamī, prior to her being ordained, sends Ānanda to the Buddha to request him to make this change. The Buddha refuses to do so and says that since he has now allowed women to enter the Order they should follow what has been laid down and not go against it. In the Cullavagga too, the Buddha declines to make this concession. But in trying to give a reason for this attitude of the Buddha the Theriya tradition attempts to make out that in the organization of the Sasana social considerations, as much as moral and ethical values, loomed large in the mind of the Master. In the Cullavagga he is reported as saying: 'Not even the Tittiyas who propound imperfect doctrines sanction such homage of men towards women. How could the Tathāgata do so?' [Vin.II.258].

We should also here consider the fact that any concession for the abrogation of what had already been laid down after careful deliberation would be grossly contradictory to the ideal which the Buddha and his early disciples appear to have upheld regarding the observance of the rules and regulations laid down for the guidance of monastic life [Ibid.III.231]. The reply which the Buddha seems to have given to Gotamī in the Chinese version of the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya is definitely more in keeping with this spirit. But we should take note of the fact that this reply would run contrary to the Theriya tradition, which at some stage, seems to have accommodated the idea that the Buddha conceded the abrogation of the minor rules [DN.II.14; Vin.II.287].

As far as we are aware there is one other Vinaya tradition which records a challenge of the *garudhammā*. The Chinese version of the Dharmagupta Vinaya has a chapter entitled Bhikkhunī Khandhaka wherein the question is asked whether the Bhikkhunīs cannot accuse the Bhikkhus under any circumstances [Taisho. Vol.22. p.927 A] The Buddha replies to say that they could not do so even if the Bhikkhus violated the rules of discipline or were guilty of offences.

These two protests on the part of the Bhikkhunis seem to show that the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha, or at least a section of it, resisted what it considered to be harsh legislation unfavourable to them.

At the same time one has to view dispassionately the position of the Buddha, who as the head of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha which was already a well groomed institution, had to safeguard against its disintegration through dispute and discontent. The fifth accusation levelled against Ānanda at the First Council, that he agitated for the admission of women into the Order [Vin.II.289], is a clear indication that even after the recognised success of the Bhikkhunī Sāsana [Apadāna II.535, v.79], there was a section of the Bhikkhus who formed as it were a consolidated opposition against it. The motive for such an attitude could have been generated by the fear of being eclipsed by the newer Order. The Chinese version of the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya includes a statement which is ascribed to the Buddha which seems to lend support to this assumption. The Buddha says that if there were no Bhikkhunis in the Sāsana, then after his death the male and female lay-devotees [*upāsaka* and *upāsikās*] would have honoured the Bhikkhus in diverse ways. But now that the Bhikkhunīs had entered the Order it would not happen so [Taisho Vol.22 p.186 B]. It is difficult here to decide how and why the presence of Bhikkhunīs in the Sāsana brought about such a radical change in the attitude of laymen towards the Bhikkhus.

Why were the Bhikkhus deprived of the honour that would have been theirs had not the Bhikkhunīs appeared on the scene? Are the Bhikkhunīs to be held responsible for the loss of prestige of the Bhikkhus? At any rate, this record of the Mahīśāsakas was undoubtedly representative of the opinion of the day regarding the Bhikkhuni Sāsana.

The Pali records of the Theriya tradition which belong to an earlier phase of the history of the Sāsana give expression to a similar feeling in the chastisement of Ānanda in whom ultimately lay the responsibility for the admission of women into the Order. An echo of this is felt in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya where Ananda



apologises to the Buddha for having requested him to permit women to enter the Order. But the Buddha absolves him saying that he did so unwittingly under the influence of Māra [Taisho Vol.22 p.186 A]. The Theriya tradition is not alone again in expressing the fact that the presence of women in the Sāsana would reduce its life span by half. We find it recorded in the Chinese version of the Dharmagupta Vinaya that the Buddha told Ānanda that if women did not enter the Order it would have lasted 500 years longer [ Ibid.p.923 C. See also Vin.II.256].

It becomes clear from what has been said so far that at the time of crystalization of Theriya traditions two ideas regarding the establishment of the Bhikkhunī Sāsana stood out clearly. A section of the Bhikkhu Saṅgha was reproachful of Ananda because he interceded with the Buddha for the sake of the bhikkhunīs. The admission of women was also considered a categorical danger to the successful continuance of the Sāsana. In the light of all this evidence a study of the *garudhammā* reveals to us the fact that the Buddha was keenly conscious of the need to steer clear of the possible rivalries of the Bhikkhus and the Bhikkhunīs and maintain healthy and harmonious relations between the two groups.

Bhikkhu Dhammavihārī  
Dharmāyatanaya  
Maharagama  
Sri Lanka

## **(7) Poverty, Hunger and Under - Development**

A little bit of relevant Buddhist thinking.

Neither the teachings of the Buddha, nor the members of the Buddhist Saṅgha who are regarded as their custodians and exponents could be expected to clear and sweep clean, all by themselves and that with the minimum delay, the

social entanglements into which a reckless society, in any part of the world, is seen slipping day after day. What is possible here on the one hand is only adequate cautioning, and on the other, the generation of an awareness in the minds of those involved to put themselves on the right gear. Then with a change of pace and a change of heart, a crisis may be averted.

### Poverty [Pali *dāḷiddiya* / Skt. *dāridriya*]

To one who is not a mendicant, to one who lives the life of a householder in the world, poverty is indeed a cause of grief. Poverty means that one possesses only a little or nothing at all called one's own [*assako*]; one is not affluent and in plenty [*anāḷhiko*]; one has to be constantly in debt to others, borrowing money [*iṇaṃ ādiyati*] on the promise of repayment, with or without interest [*vaḍḍhiṃ paṭisunāti*]. The precise statement of this whole idea in Pali in the Buddhist texts occurs in the Anguttara Nikaya as follows:

*Dāḷiddiyaṃ bhikkhave dukkhaṃ lokasmim kāmabhogino' ti? Evaṃ bhante. Yam'pi bhikkhave dāḷiddo assako anāḷhiko iṇaṃ ādiyati iṇadānam' pi bhikkhave dukkhaṃ lokasmim kḌmabhogino' ti. ...Iti kho bhikkhave dḌḷiddiyam 'pi dukkhaṃ lokasmim kḌmabhogino iṇadānam 'pi vaḍḍhi pi ..codanḌ "pi anucariyḌ 'pi bandhanam 'pi dukkhaṃ lokasmim kḌmabhogino [ AN.III.351.f.]*

We choose to refer the reader to the primary sources in this manner, wherever necessary, mainly to intimate to him the wealth of clear and positive Buddhist thinking which pertains to areas of human well-being. Buddhist thinking also closely scrutinises the presence and absence of wellness in the human community. Buddhism does not turn its back on the happiness of the man of the world or the success or failure of his living. Nor does it explain its absence in society as the outcome of divine misanthropy or heavenly vengeance. Buddhist thinking knows a layman as being caught up in ramified relationships with persons and institutions. It also knows that to put himself in a meaningful and acceptable position in society, man needs the means, i.e. wealth and property

[*dhana* and *bhoga*]. The well-known Sigāla Sutta [DN.III.180.ff.] is a learned thesis of the highest order on this subject which not only stresses the diversity of these human relationships but also their reciprocity and mutual interdependence.

## Basic Needs

Even in terms of every man's basic needs of food and clothing, the Buddhist texts appear to know, as it were, of the millions who daily go to bed at night without a meal. They say, almost with distressing pain of mind, that the food and clothing of such people who are in utter poverty is obtained with utmost difficulty: *Daḷidde appannapānabhojane kasiravuttike yattha kasirena ghāsacchādo labbhati* [AN. III, 385]. Here it is immediately reckoned with that poverty and hunger go hand in hand. That is why poverty or the absence of such means of existence makes a man unhappy in society, both in relation to himself and in relation to the community in which he lives.

Having thus recognised poverty as the bane of social order in the world, Buddhism concerns itself with the successful production of wealth, its economical and productive use and its conservation as reserves for leaner times. Buddhist texts thus penetrate deep into many areas of advanced economic thinking of the world today, second to none even in the most sophisticated political ideologies. Starting at a lamentably low economic level so much as not to possess even the basic minimum of food and clothing [*kasirena ghāsacchādo labbhati*], the first remedial measure recommended is that the person in such a sad situation should himself take the initiative to acquire some amount of money or wealth [*dhana*]. When the question is put as to how riches are obtained [ *Kathaṃ su vindate dhanam*. Sn. v. 185] , as was done by Ālavaka who is referred to as a Yakkha [ perhaps a prosperous and affluent chieftain ] in the Ālavaka Sutta, the prompt and direct Buddhist reply was: ' He riches finds whose life is in the right, who bears his yoke with strenuous resolve '. These words, we believe, need no commentary.

In the Pali we have it as : *Patirūpakārī dhuravā utthātā vindate dhanam*. Sn. v. 187. If one were looking at this reply as a Buddhist, or as any one with sense and sanity at that, one must immediately take note of three basic concepts:

1. He whose life is in the right [ *patirūpakārī* ]
2. He who bears his yoke [ *dhuravā* ]
3. He who with strenuous resolve [ *utthātā* ]

To the Buddhist, there is such a thing as ethics of living, ethics derived through down to earth human considerations and not those derived through divine sanctions. Therefore so basic and vital to mankind. So even as he gets down to gather together his basic needs, it has to be within a visibly inviolable ethical frame-work. His life has to be in the right [ *patirūpakārī* = does what is proper]. The other two considerations center on the role of the individual and his active involvement, as well as on the strength of his personality. Accepting personal responsibility [ *dhuravā* = of firm resolve] to better his economic situation in life [ *vindate dhanam* ], one has to put in a good deal of honest striving [ *utthātā*]. This line of action for economic redress, undoubtedly carries with it a dignity and a sense of triumph and achievement. The almost soul-elevating Pali word used here is the verb *utthahati* which means 'strives with firm resolve'. Wherever the Buddhist texts speak of the wealth of a virtuous good man against which there can be no slogan shouting, they speak of it as being acquired with effort and striving [ *utthānaviriyādhigata* AN.III. 45 & 76] and add that it has been earned with the sweat of one's brow [ *sedāvakkhitta*] and the might of one's arms [ *bāhābalaparicita*]. It is also said to be righteously acquired [ *dhammika* and *dhammaladdha*]. If it were not so, not only would money be the root of all evil but money would also be rooted in evil. This is why the Dhammapada very firmly says that it would **be the tragedy of household life if a man who dwells therein does not strive with firm resolve to establish his economic well being** [ *anuttānamalā gharā* Dh. v.241]. It would be of interest to note here that only a very few translators of the Dhammapada get this correct.

Many others who translate it as '**non-repair is the bane of houses**', guided by Commentarial misdirection , only provide frivolous amusement and hardly any sense.

## Relief Measures.

Buddhists also recommend relief measures, both at society level and state level , to ease this lamentable situation of poverty. Accepting as real the age old social malaise of haves and have-nots, the Buddhists recommend the act of *dāna* or charitable giving as a corrective measure. One is called upon to view this act of making good a deficiency in one's social group as a source of joy and satisfaction, yielding good results, right here and now [*dānasamvibhāgarato*: delighting in giving and sharing at AN. III.53. See also Iti.18]. It is also looked upon as a willingness on the part of men and women to part with some of their possessions [*vossaggarato* Ibid.]. *Dāna* thus viewed from the religious angle stimulates the growth of such high ranking virtues like *mettā* [friendliness, loving kindness], *karuṇā*, [compassion] and *muditā* [appreciative joy]. They are religiously noble [ or heavenly ] modes of living in the life of man [*brahmavihāra*].

As part of state policy, the rulers are expected to alleviate poverty by making planned gifts of money to put people on their feet and enable them to make a start in life on their own . [See Cakkavattisīhanāda Sutta. DN.III 66 f. *Iminā tvaṃ ambho purisa dhanena attano mātāpitaro ca posehi puttadāraṇ ca brāhmaṇesu ... saggasamvattanikaṇ' ti.*]. It is also the responsibility of the state to some extent to open avenues of employment and correctly put people in places where they would make their best, there being no square pegs in round holes or vice versa. They are to be employed, each according to his ability and competence [*Ye raṇṇo janapade ussaḥiṃsu kasigorakkhe vanijjāya ... rājaporise ...* DN.1.136]. It is to be noted that in every case, whether it is for the production of wealth or for the correct and fruitful utilisation of wealth , the efficiency and diligence of the person concerned is of primary importance. In Buddhism, the machinery for social upgrading is basically the culture of man [i.e. the development of his

cultural components of word and deed and his basic social and religious values] which make him a man who has developed himself : *bhāvitatta*.

Let us now turn our attention to the question of hunger to which we have already referred under the Buddhist concept of man's basic needs of food and clothing [*ghāsacchādanaparamo* and *ghāsacchādanaparamatā* MN.I.360 ; DN.I.60]. It is at poverty level that these, namely food and clothing are obtained with utmost difficulty [*daḷidde ... kasirena ghāsacchādo labbhati*. AN.III 385]. Thus it goes without saying that poverty and hunger go hand in hand. Nevertheless, as far as Buddhist texts go, it is a painful situation which is not to be made light of. The Dhammapada which we wish to present as the Buddhist Guide Book in Life, i.e. the book of guidance for both monk and layman , aptly calls hunger the dreaded disease [ *Jighacchā paramā rogā* . DhP. v. 203 ].

Around this verse is told the well-known and at the same time the most touching story of how the Buddha once had a poor hungry peasant fed and comforted, before he set about to preach the *dhamma* to him. [*Aññātaraupāsakavatthu* in the Sukhavagga of the Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā Vol. III 261 f.].

In calling hunger the dreaded disease, it is said with a down to earth realism that no amount of medication ever cures this ailment. It is known to be the disease perennial, nevertheless by no means welcome or tolerable. The Buddha himself makes the precise comment that ` afflicted with pangs of hunger one comprehends not the *dhamma*, even while it is being preached ' [*jighacchādukkhena dhamme desiyamāne ' pi paṭivijjhituṃ na sakkhissatī ' ti* . DhA.III.263].

## Moderation.

At the same time, over-eating is looked upon with disdain and is viewed as leading to ill-health and physical damage and discomfort. Moderation in eating, on the other hand, is considered contributory to good health and physical comfort

[*appābādhatā* and *appātaṅkatā* as well as *lahuṭṭhāna*, *bala* and *phāsuvihāra* MN.1.37 ]. One word of caution here. The media today, all the world over, mislead the world on the question of food and clothing, food in particular. Advertising has reached the peak of perfection, with its ability to deceive and entice. Eat in the interests of the salesman, and positively not of the consumer is more or less the slogan today. But be not misled by such cliches of the business world where consumerism reigns supreme today.

Buddhism is non-ascetic in its attitude to food. The Bodhisatta totally rejected the *starvation policy* which he had taken upon himself while he was experimenting with his severe austerities. He declared in no uncertain terms that he could never attain any blissful states with a body reduced to such utter emaciation [*Na kho taṃ sukaraṃ sukhaṃ adhigantum evaṃ adhimattakasimānam pattakāyena. Yannūnā' haṃ olārikaṃ āhāraṃ āhāreyyaṃ odanakummāsan 'ti.* MN.1.247 ]. One single look at the Gandharan image of Sakyamuni as Bodhisatta practising austerities would convince us both of the severity of his austerities referred to above as well as of the wisdom of his judgment. He took a realistic view of the body 's need for food . Accepting its basic need on the one hand, he specifies firmly its limits on the other.

It is with such an attitude to life and its basic requirements that Buddhism endorses and encourages correct earning of money and honourable acquisition of wealth [*Uṭṭhānādhigataṃ dhanam* and *dhammaladdha bhoga*]. It is in order that one may feed and clothe oneself adequately as well as look after the needs of one's dependants like one's parents and one's wife and children. For want of space here we would only refer the reader to a delightful treatise on this subject under the title ***bhogānam ādiya*** or Uses of Wealth which appears in the Anguttara Nikāya [ AN.III 45 f.].

## Elimination of Hunger.

In order to eliminate hunger among the humans, Buddhist texts speak not

only of the energetic production of wealth [*uṭṭhānaviriyādhigataṃ dhanaṃ*] and the consequent increase of buying power but also recommend the industrious production of food through diligently handled agriculture. In the Therīgāthā, our exemplary Theri Paṭācārā observes this commendable hunger-eliminating process through agricultural production in these words.

*Naṅgalehi kasaṃ khettaṃ bījāni pavapaṃ chamā  
puttadārāni posentā dhanaṃ vindanti mānavā.*

Thig. v.112

With ploughs ploughing their fields,  
the seeds they sow on the land.  
To feed their wives and children  
the men thus earn their wealth.

She has obviously seen the activities of enterprising lay men, operating obviously in the more industrious and saner sections of the human community, and says that men plough their fields and sow seed therein to raise a harvest to feed their families and to build up their economy. It is undoubtedly the enterprise and industry of the lay community thus reflected which stirred her up into her spiritual earnestness.

It is the inspiration of this activity of well-meaning wise men which stirred Paṭācārā up to her spiritual quest. While Buddhist texts essentially set their eyes on the attainment of transcendental goals, one discovers also a great wealth of information addressed to the lay householders which aim at achieving success for the man of the world, both from the point of economic prosperity and his harmonious social inter relatedness.

Conscious of the need to handle the problem of adequate food in society and its well managed distribution, Buddhist texts go so far as to instruct for the smooth handling of the provision of food even for workmen at work places. We discover here a vital point of labour disputes of today, namely the care and



concern for the welfare of the workman, handled smoothly with ease and success. In the handling of human labour, provision of meals in addition to wages is considered a *sine qua non*. In addition to wages which are calculated and given on a monthly basis [*māsikaṃ paribbayaṃ*], there also had to be provision of daily meals [*devasikaṃ bhattañ ca*] in the handling of human labour *bhattavetana anuppadānena* in the Sigālovāda Sutta at DN.III.191]. This term ***bhatta vetana*** certainly is not **wages for food** as is mistakenly rendered quite often in Sinhala with ***bat sandahā vaṭup*** by Sri Lankan scholars of great eminence, both monk and layman. It must necessarily be ***bat hā vaṭup*** = **food and wages**.

Insight with regard to the equitable distribution of food, cautioning against misappropriation and hoarding of food by unscrupulous individuals is also very much reflected in the Aggañña Sutta of the Digha Nikaya [DN.III.92]. Here we witness a rationing process of agricultural produce, almost at a food-gatherers age [*sāliṃ vibhajeyyāma*, i.e. divide up the available portions of rice yield] and set up limits on consumption [*mariyādaṃ ṭhapeyyāma*]. ***mariyādaṃ*** here [ which we choose to translate as `limits of consumption ' ] has been twice mistranslated by two different translators as `rice fields ' in 1921 and 1987. Here is Rhys Davids of 1921: `Come now, let us divide off the rice fields and set boundaries thereto. And so they divided off the rice and setup boundaries round it.' [ Dialogues III. 87 / DN.III. 92 ]. In 1987 Maurice Walshe translates it as : `So now let us divide up the rice in to fields with boundaries. So they did so'. [ Thus Have I Heard by Maurice Walshe. p.412].

## Under-development

Finally let us address ourselves to this talk about under development. Does anybody anywhere know as to what should be the correct meter reading as far as development is concerned? Can there be such a standardisation? It is unimaginable that there could be such a thing as Greenwich Meridian time in the development process. Its variability has to be conceded in terms of religious,

cultural and ethnic differences, to mention only a few basics of variation. Schumacher in his *The Small is Beautiful*, we believe, makes an honest attempt to view this problem with detachment. It is colonialist or pedagogical to think otherwise. Or putting it differently, it is Apartheid-like thinking. The dangers of accepting such value judgements for whatever reason, without questioning, are too numerous. It exposes groups of people of smaller stature to certain types of contamination, infection and deterioration, under the crushing pressure of clumsy boots of the bigger brothers. Policy wise, the talk of under development and under developed countries makes available new markets for the disposal and sale of the stock-in-trade of such vociferous groups. Whether they trade in political cliches, social concepts, religious dogmas or lifestyles, the painful global process of trafficking and the equally painful products of overriding are the same. It makes dressed up Chimpanzees and Orangutans of poor humans who have a right to retain their identities with a legitimate pride and dignity. This generally is what the humans in the so-called developing countries have to face and put up with in their process of development.

People should move towards a more meaningful goal of development, well within their means, a goal which finally does not shatter their image, a goal which they can well afford. Unborn generations should not have to pay for our fallacies of today. Let every Buddhist, both at the top and the bottom, realise that the sky is not the limit in development. Policy-makers would do well to remember, at least out of sympathy for the people for whom the policies are being made, not to take the affluent countries with their top-heavy material culture as our models.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, let it be remembered that Buddhism upholds a policy of dignified detachment both from persons and things of the world, while advocating the greatest measure of philanthropy and magnanimity. One should not blunder into viewing this as a state of indifference. Our identities being carefully discerned both at personal and at group levels, religion or culture - wise, we

should do nothing to jeopardise that position. The required degree of detachment depends on that identity, who we are and what we stand up for, like that of teacher from pupil. So also is the direction of alignment. This is where a real and intelligent understanding of ***Sammā vimutti*** [= true and correct release or liberation] plays its vital role. Let us therefore develop ***Sammā diṭṭhi***, i.e., correct vision in a philosophy of life, contributing as it does to detachment. And mind you, detachment without tears and regrets, and with the much desired consequent tranquillity and peace. The results should be as good as that of an unmanned space-ship flight, reaching the planned goal. ***Sammā diṭṭhi*** as the initial stage, leading in its upward process, would ultimately end up in perfect release, ***sammā vimutti***, two stages beyond the Noble Eight fold Path [*dasariḡasamannāgato arahā hoti*. MN. III. 76 ].

Ven. Professor Dhammavihari

International Buddhist Research and Information Centre

## (8) Society, Crime and the Solace of Religion

as viewed via Buddhism.

**M**edium-sized dictionaries in common use today define society as 'the sum of human conditions and activity regarded as a whole functioning inter-dependently'. [The Concise Oxford Dictionary]. The same source adds a second note : 'a social community (all societies must have firm laws)'. We would immediately agree that society is a conglomeration of humans, adding the proviso that it is 'a collection into a coherent mass'. Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary adds further: 'a corporate body: any organized association'. As we take note of these observations 'a corporate body', 'functioning interdependently' and 'organized association' we are driven to concede to mankind a plurality of such societies, with their own organizational diversity and

functional interdependence.

Humans on this planet, created or evolved, date back to several millennia, even before the beginning of the Christian era. India and China could boast of a very high level of culture, material, intellectual and spiritual, of such people. The *Rta* of the Vedic Indians and *Tao* of the ancient Chinese people reflect the moral consciousness of these ancient cultures and the relationship of morality to human welfare. The Indians, in fact, wisely created their own gods like **Indra** and **Varuṇa** to look after these specific areas [ *Rtasya gopau* = guardians of cosmic and moral order ]. Testimony of history being in our favour, we would unhesitatingly subscribe to the above view of human societies as 'organized associations', 'functioning interdependently', but with their own levels of ideological high-water marks.

World organizations interested in social welfare activities **have to be constantly reminded of this diversity of social organizations and the plurality of their aspirations**. World powers, whether they be political, religious or ethnic, **cannot be allowed to entertain too many messianic ambitions of saving the millions**, viewed in different epochs of history as being paganish on religious criteria and latterly as under-developed in terms of their own economic assessment. If one does not pay heed to this, the swing **could be like the Afro-centric challenge of the Euro-centric emphasis in the presentation of church history in Christianity**, leading often to bitter and unpleasant results of maligning and vilification. In the absence of this awareness, the world has been compelled in recent times, to witness in many areas, massive or less massive processes of steamrolling in the name of *a.* social welfare, or *b.* economic upgrading or *c.* political liberation.

Buddhism thus basically accepts the identity and independence of all such groups which are 'corporate bodies : organized associations'. We have to accept that they have their own laws and conventions which govern their life and activities. At times, these may not be more than age-old traditions which, in their

social administration, are as binding as their legal systems. Buddhist texts recognize the former as 'the judgement of the wise' or *viññū + upavāda* [ *viññū pare upavadeyyum* ]. It is expected to exercise its authority over society at all times with as much validity as the laws of the land. Even in determining the legitimacy of privately owned property, Buddhist texts specify that there should be no legal objections or possibilities of prosecution [ *adaṇḍāraho* ] in terms of ownership. In addition to this, nor should such ownership come under the reproach of 'judgement of the wise' [ *anupavajjo* ]. For full details of this, see the analysis provided under the enforcement of the second precept relating to theft in the Fivefold Code of Buddhist Ethics of the *Pañcasīla*.<sup>i</sup>

Therefore in the Buddhist concept of social welfare or social assistance, the major contribution should primarily be to assist such groups who are in need, to maintain law and order within themselves and to develop their stature individually and collectively, on their own lines, within a framework of sound moral values. The best example of this Buddhist attitude occurs in the story of the legendary Universal Monarch referred to as *Rājā Cakkavatti*. When he is requested by his provincial kings to give them with regard to governance of their lands [ *anusāsa mahārāja* ], he admonishes them to continue with their own forms of government as they did before [ *yathābhuttaṇ ca bhuñjatha* ], but insists that they maintain a perfect moral order within their kingdoms, strictly adhering to the observance of the Fivefold Code of Ethics [DN.II.173f.], referred to above.

Growth and development in any society is not to be viewed only in terms of its material output and consequent uplift of its material life style. Underlying all development should be a core of values which are entrenched in the people. They necessarily have to be both directive and restrictive. On the one hand, they have to be target-oriented and keep moving forward, hoping to achieve specific goals. On the other, there would also have to be necessarily prevalent in society, or seen newly emerging, certain patterns of thinking and acting which would invariably rule out the strange importations as unacceptable to the already

established culture patterns. Leadership in society, both political and religious, has necessarily to take cognizance of this. In the world today, when assistance is calculated to be offered for developmental programs, this aspect of the situation is grossly overlooked. For various considerations of expediency, one chooses to turn a blind eye on them. At times they are even deliberately dodged.

What we have attempted so far is to take up for discussion a universally valid concept of society. We believe that equipped with such a concept, it should be possible for persons or groups in any part of the world to stretch out a hand of assistance to those in other parts who are in need of it. This should of course always be without the danger of damaging or overrunning their cultural worth. It is clearly evident that the world today, at least the world of saner and more magnanimous men, is feeling more and more the need to be cautious on this issue and to provide assistance only on these healthy lines.

We have now unhesitatingly stated that assistance towards social welfare in the so-called less developed countries should come primarily in the area of establishing law and order. Whatever inoffensive aid there is to follow, they could come in due order. In other words it is towards making a genuine contribution in stabilising the social equilibrium within a community of people. It is in countries where such assistance is urgently needed that bitter battles, allegedly on account of political, religious and ethnic differences are seen to be raging. It is no secret, and by no means an exaggeration, that assistance at world level often come to validate these grievances and hostilities, and add to their inflammability. The naked truth of this, i.e. the offer of assistance at this stage and at that level is, putting it in plain language, is seen to be no more than 'fishing in troubled waters.' What we do today in such situations, with hastily and arbitrarily taken decisions even at the highest international levels, is the provision of greater 'fire power', in the name of defence, to the one or the other of two battling sides with whom we have secretly decided to invest. Therefore it is paramount that wheresoever assistance or aid is offered to avert or overcome a crisis situation, in peace or in war, that we

insist on the observance of perfect neutrality, unmindful of religious, ethnic or political ideological loyalties and alliances. Anything to the contrary would amount to no less than a vulgar exploitation of a moment of political weakness. On closer analysis, these situations are even discovered to be the results of ingenious international manipulation.

Let us now turn our attention to the second area of our subject, viz. crime. Crime in society, no matter in which particular area or sector it finds its luxuriant growth, stands in the way of development, both with regard to down-to-earth material growth, as well as socio-moral and cultural enhancement. Crimes like man-slaughter literally bleeds society to death. Ask yourself today, in the east or the west, the question as to who kills and kill in what manner. The answers you get would just stun the world through its length and breadth. Teen-agers, nearer thirteen than nineteen, are capable of murdering in cold blood, persons much older, men and women, even one's own parents who beget them. Whether it be theft, hijacking, rape or any other like drug-related crimes, the situation is very similar. As to who commits crimes, sex wise, even women are becoming capable of many things or anything, although not in such large numbers at the moment. As to the *modus operandi*, it is now acknowledged in the technologically and scientifically more developed countries that criminals who are behind bars in prisons where they are locked up for crimes they have committed, are learning to perfect their techniques, improving on their old ones through what they see and hear over the media which are generously provided for their entertainment within these 'houses of reform.'

The efficacy of the law enforcement authorities in some countries get these criminals behind bars sooner than in others. But few have ever been able to eradicate or reduce the criminality of these convicted persons to any appreciable extent. Strange enough, a good many of those who come out of these 'houses of reform', sometimes even having had the benefit of being put on parole, commit the same crime for which they had been originally convicted, with far greater

intensity and alarmingly greater frequency.

It is here that one feels an early educative process of crime prevention, than one of prosecution and punishment, would pay better dividends. The latter, prosecution and punishment, indeed are indispensably needed, we hasten to add. But a long term process of value inculcation, during the most formative years of childhood to adolescence, would be what is much more needed. It would bring more calculable and wholesome results. For most criminals are seen and heard admitting that the villainy of the crimes they committed was never a serious consideration in their lives or in their minds in the pre-crime early days. The society in which they lived nor the corpus of public opinion in the midst of which they grew up, they vociferously declare, ever indicated this to them. The study of history of court cases in many countries in recent years reveals this. The history of the recently convicted school teacher Price in the U.S.A. who had sexually abused his female students over a period of more than a decade, unobjected and uncomplained either by the victims or by society, as he boldly declared in court, is a good example of this.

In a belated and somewhat misguided and misdirected attempt to come to terms with a hostile break-away youth, both men and women, the world in many places is seen to be giving them too many concessions. The hostility of youth, we would almost say, has been in most instances provoked. Parental pre-occupation in a highly competitive world has been one of the prime causes of this unrest and challenge. Consequent inattention and a resulting feeling of neglect, and an apparent negation and denial of rights has been admittedly smouldering in the background all the time.

Through social and other areas of stimuli, the young of today seem to be prematurely acquiring criminally dangerous feelings of freedom of thought and freedom of action. They are also seen cladding themselves in stupefying armours of self-righteousness. It is no secret that these patterns of aggressive thinking, far from being self-acquired by the younger generation, are the genuine products,



primary or secondary, of diverse processes of indoctrination. One notices with unbroken regularity revengeful and retaliatory claims of lost or denied rights, demolishing challenges of authority levelled at churchmen and social scientists, and now reaching even up to parents at the domestic level. One also witnesses frustration at different levels in diverse areas of life activity, driving fiercely almost to suicidal limits.

Crime does not necessarily originate with the youth alone. But most crimes in society, especially in the western world today, are known to be traceable to youthful origin. Therefore in seeking remedial measures for the prevention of crime in society, one feels justified in saying that correction and steps for correction should be pushed as far back as the home where children could and should be handled in their formative years. The parents are called upon to play this teacher role. Therefore Buddhist thinking, with great vision and keen foresight, calls parents the '**first teachers**' [ *pubbācariyā* See AN.I.132 ]. They are the ones who initiate the introduction of children to the world [ *imassa lokassa dassetāro* Ibid.]. The first graduation of one's progeny is indeed to take place in the home.

In this sphere, while Buddhist thinking is known to insist that correction, through a build-up of harmonious inter-personal relationships, should begin early at the domestic familial level, it also makes many meaningful recommendations for strengthening inter-familial and extra-familial relationships. The best study of this social analysis in terms of the components of the family and its adjuncts comes in the Sigāla Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya [DN.III.180 ff.]. The concept of the community and the extended family are very much counted upon in Buddhist socio-ethical considerations. They are all reckoned with as inexhaustible sources of inspiration, instruction and discipline, leaving little room for the much lamented single-parent-families or the fatherless homes of today's world. This concept of a well-strung society is looked upon as the main mechanism which keeps the entire society in gear. Each individual in society, particularly as father or mother,

is thus invested with a share of responsibility, both for his or her own personal well-being as well as the well-being of society as a whole. Herein nobody causes injury to or jeopardises the interests of the one or the other [*N'eva attavyābādhāya na paravyābādhāya na ubhayavyābādhāya...* See MN.1.415 ].It means ` Contributing neither to the detriment of oneself, nor to the detriment of the other, nor of both...].

At a very early date of more than twenty-five centuries ago, Buddhism scores a first in offering to the world **self-example** or **attupanāyika** [See SN.V.353] as the basis of good ethical and moral living. The stabilizer for the moral goodness of the individual or society is not sought from outside. It is not the unwillingness to offend an external saving grace in which one personally believes that keeps the humans in loving relationship to one another. It is indeed the down-to-earth humaneness of love itself, i.e. deep-seated friendliness or universal loving kindness of one to the other, man and bird and beast [Pali **mettā** / Sk. **maītrī**].

The Buddha, in his renowned sermon at the Bamboo Gate or Veludvāra [Veludvāreyya Sutta at SN.V. 351 f.] puts forward this thesis of developing love and concern for all that exists [= *sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā*. Sn. v.147], irrespective of being human or animal [= *ye keci pāṇabhūtattā* loc.cit.], or whether they be great in length or be large, medium or small in size [= *dīghā vā ye mahantā vā majjhimā rassakānukathulā* loc.cit.]. This he does on the basis of love and concern which one holds for oneself. Taking oneself as the example or putting oneself in the position of the other, let not one hurt or kill another [= *attānam upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye*. Dh. v.129]. The fact that you love yourself and like to have everything that is yours well guarded and protected, should prompt you to love and guard equally well everybody else. Such an attitude of persons to the world in which they live, each with a dignity and a responsibility of his or her own and not as products coming out of a mass-producing factory, should be a tower of strength for the world and should serve as a basis for its solidarity. Such strength would readily be available at hand at

down to earth level, and does not need to be obtained privately or secretly from elsewhere, from a personally cherished source, and on a basis of favours for the chosen few of this creed or that, through prayer and supplication. In the absence of such a frame of mind one becomes capable of invoking the name of an unseen and only believed in power for support and justification and dart across into the field to massacre and destroy even one's own brethren, visibly present and seen besides oneself. Recent decades in world history have provided ample testimony to this.

It is on this basis of self-example that the Buddha attempted to reform and re-culture the people of the Bamboo Gate, both for their own happiness and prosperity here in this very existence as well as for a more blissful life after death. This is exactly what the people of Veludvāra sought from the Buddha.<sup>ii</sup> The people, who as good home-dwelling lay-devotees [*gahapatayo*] heard it from the Buddha, were confident of the assurance given to them. They were told that any good lay-devotee [= *ariyasāvako*] who is endowed with seven modes of noble living [= *sattahi saddhammehi samannāgato*] which consists of threefold good bodily conduct and fourfold restraint in speech and has, in addition, firm faith born of conviction in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha [= *Buddhe...Dhamme...Sanghe aveccappasādena samannagato hoti*. Ibid.355 f.], and practises to perfection the moral code which is beloved of the worthy ones could declare himself to be a stream-winner who would never fall off from his human state after death and be born in a degenerate lower existence or *apāya*<sup>iii</sup>. The residents of Veludvāra, non-Buddhist as they were at the outset, expressed their appreciation and declared their delight in what the Buddha taught and chose to follow the way he recommended<sup>iv</sup>.

Out of such a process of healthy social visualization there would emerge the correct atmosphere for the successful receipt of social assistance and whatever else is available by way of aid for social welfare for the much needed areas all over the world. Thus Buddhism is seen to stress the reality of the role of human

endeavour in bringing about an optimum of human achievement, whether it be in the area of social wellness, intellectual growth, technological development or religio-cultural upliftment. Bring to mind here the successful repair and correction of the Hubble Space Telescope not very long ago, well away from the terra firma of the humans, but by a team of humans which included even a woman in their midst. Buddhists do not venture to leave such a task in the hands of the gods.

Bhikkhu Dhammavihari  
International Buddhist Research  
and Information Center  
380/ 9 Sarana Road  
Off Bauddhaloka Mawatha  
Colombo - 7  
Sri Lanka

## (9) Sermon for the IL Poya of November 17, 1994

*Sabbe tasanti daṇḍassa sabbesaṃ jīvitaṃ piyaṃ  
attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye*

This is verse No. 130 of the Dhammapada and its English translation would read as -

Everyone dreads being beaten up.  
To everyone his or her own life is dear.  
Think and feel as if you were the other.  
Then kill not nor plan to have killings done.

The subject of my sermon to you today is **Respect for Life as the true basis for a sound Philosophy of Life**. This, I insist, must exist both at private individual level as well as at collective public level. I maintain that this, and this alone, entitles men and women to be leaders of their fellow beings. Nay, even simply to

occupy a place in their midst.

I consider the sermon today as being important for more reasons than one. This is the one but last full moon day of the year 1994. With one more full moon in the sky in December, the lunar calendar of the Buddhists would invariably bring the year to a close. This leaves us with only six more years to wind up our old and threadbare century, the twentieth, thus requiring us to greet with confidence or with trepidation as it may be, the twenty-first. We would justifiably expect it to be smiling with us round the corner.

As Buddhists we have had more than twenty-five centuries of recorded history. This is quite a considerable length of time. But what has happened during this present century, including two world wars, the second being more ghastly than the first, makes us wonder whether the world has been created with any purposeful sense or sanity. "Wither mankind?" we are compelled to ask. Or "Whose cause are we serving, of god or man?" That could also be a reasonable query.

Wars in the west and wars in the east, and wars in our midst right here, have made us shudder. Causes of these wars have been in some cases, historically viewed, racial prejudices. Examined more closely and precisely, they turn out to be imaginary and exaggerated notions of ethnic supremacy. The naked truth of this is admittedly another form of barbaric and primitive tribal arrogance. Just refresh your memory in terms of the great Holocaust of World War II, of the brutal massacre of Jews under the Nazi regime.

Tides of such misanthropic thinking and acting seem to be surfacing ever and ever, nearer home and further from home, invading the world everywhere. Let us not fool ourselves into believing that we know them not, or see them not. In addition to these, we also have now begun to witness political wars, in consequence of clashes of political ideologies, for example, the elegant global encounters between democracy and communism.

Since we talk now from the threshold of religion. If religions of the world have a part to play in the name of those above or below, we believe they should talk about things right here. Right here to put the humans on this earth, created or evolved into existence through a meaningful and purposeful process of evolution, in proper relation to one another. It is not for religions to put into the heads of poor mortals a diabolic sense of race or religious superiority, as being descendants of this or that creed, and charge them into battle array for the propagation of their own individual fanaticism across the world.

Both the more organized classical religions of the world as well as newly emerging religious cultic groups seem to be indulging in such activities at a suicidal rate. Some are even known to be declaring that like in the traditional story of the race of the hare and the tortoise, that it is incumbent on them to make up for lost time and gather harvests of new converts into their fold before the turn of the century.

It is no secret that at world level many groups seem to have their stakes in this gamble and therefore seem to be alerted against one another and viewing each other with distrust and suspicion. This typhoon sweep, like the wave of violent political indoctrination which swept many regions of the eastern and western world some time ago, seems to be set in motion today in some regions of the eastern world where propagandist investors are expecting to gather rich harvests in the circles of the economically and emotionally handicapped. Such movements have to be viewed more seriously by the intellectually stabler groups in society. They should take note of the fact that movements of this kind carry with them a serious "writing on the wall". For the gratification they offer to the converts definitely bear an exploitative character. The beneficiaries are ultimately left much poorer, routed out of their indigenous cultural moorings but carrying with them an aggressively enduring mercenary character.

As against these divisive patterns of exploitative religious propaganda, on whichever basis they are carried out, the Buddhist position, in its philosophical

vision, has been that life is a unity irrespective of its higher or lower grades. Life in the universe, including man, animal and even plant, is part of the whole ecosystem, each one totally integrated to the other. For their own healthy sustenance, they have to be kept thus bonded together.

Buddhism upholds a creed of loving relationships. Plant life is treated with delicate respect, although no legislation is made in the Theravada Buddhist tradition, binding on lay persons, against its violation. Monks of senior status, however, shall certainly desist from such acts of destruction. As a part of secular ethics it is addressed even to the layman that no man shall tear away any branch of a tree under the shadow of which he enjoyed a rest. It is said to be treacherous behaviour. This is Buddhist thinking.

*Yassa rukkhassa chāyāya nisīdeyya sayeyya vā  
na tassa sākhā bhajeyya mittadubbho hi pāpako.*

This virtue of respect for plant life finds positive expression in such ideas expressed in the Samyutta Nikaya as [ S.1. 33 ]

*ārāmaropā vanaropā ye janā setukārakā  
papaca udapānaca ye dadanti upassayaṃ  
tesaṃ divā ca ratto ca sadā puṃṇaṃ pavaḍḍhati  
dhammaṭṭhā sīlasampannā te janā saggagāmino.*

Those who undertake the nurture of fruit and flower trees,  
And they who construct bridges for men to cross over streams,  
And who provide water and shelter for the weary and the weak ;  
Day and night their virtues grow.  
Those men of correct vision and ways,  
To heaven with ease they go.

As for the monks, they are required to refrain from dumping any garbage in places where plants grow. In addition to aesthetic considerations, in pursuance of

this wholesome attitude to nature, they are barred from all acts of environmental pollution. They are not to physically ease themselves close to sources of water or stretches of grasslands. Further to this, senior monks, i.e. all those who have reached the stage of *upasampanna* are required to keep off from roaming the country side in order to prevent causing damage to germinating young seedlings during the rainy season. This in fact is the origin of today's highly venerated Vassa Retreat. It is literally a Keep Off the Grass indication.

These considerations are far more important today than they were twenty-five centuries ago. In our interpretation of Buddhism to the world today, these are well and truly to be treated as such, with their correct stresses indicated. Thus every Buddhist practitioner necessarily becomes a protector of the environment. He is expected to be lovingly bound to it. Both parties, man and nature, are believed to be benefiting in the process. India of Buddha's day knew of both natural forest tracts as well as man grown ones adjacent to the big cities of the day and were known as *jātavana* and *ropitavana*. These were viewed as places of solace and comfort, enriching human life considerably. The Buddha is believed to be speaking very highly of the forest: *Handa eko gamissāmi araaṃ buddhavaṇṇitam*.

The finest example of Buddhist thinking, placing man in relation to the entire ecosystem of the universe to which he belongs, is the Buddhist Metta Sutta or more popularly known as the Karaniya Metta Sutta. Its immense value as a basic living philosophy for all mankind is virtually lost to us today by its being reckoned as a powerful protective chant or *paritta*. Its power well and truly lies in the character transformation it is expected to bring about in the life of each individual in his or her relationship to the whole ecosystem around. As far as life in the universe is considered, such distinctions of grading as human or otherwise, large or small, visibly seen or not, including even those yet to be born, existing in embryonic states, are not to be used as bases of discrimination. They are all to be contained within the frame work of loving kindness. The relevant portion of the



sutta runs as:

*Ye keci pāṇabhūtatthi tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā  
īghā vā ye mahantā va majjhimā rassakānukathulā  
ittthā vā ye' va addittthā ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre  
hūtā vā sambhavesī vā sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā.*

Whatever living things there be, weak and powerful altogether,  
Large or small, massive or minute, seen or unseen, near or far,  
Born to life or yet in embryonic stages. May they all be well and happy.

If any human individual can possibly acquire this infinite range of vision within his or her mental frame or as the sutta itself puts it **mānasam bhūvaye aparimānam** and include within it all forms and grades of life known to exist, and develop nothing but boundless love and friendly relations towards them, i.e. **mettā sabbalokasmiṃ mānasam bhūvaye aparimānam**, this is declared to be the highest mode of living, divinely supreme, for any human being. The sutta calls it **brahman etam vihāram idham āhu**.

Let us now take a closer look at this attitude or the quality of mind which the humans are called upon develop with regard to what exists in the world in which they themselves live. It is called **mettā** and means a ' state of friendliness '. It implies the absence of any thoughts of hostility or ill-will and the Pali has those precise meaningful words **averam = without enmity** and **asapattam = without hostility**. It certainly requires a culture of one's own mind, a grooming of one's attitudes to everything else besides oneself. And this, to the same extent that one loves oneself and is concerned about one's own well-being. This idea is beautifully contained in the stanza from the Dhammapada [ Dhp. v. 130] with which we commenced our sermon today : **attānam upamaṃ katvā na haneyya na ghātaye**. In doing anything that involves others or has an impact on others, one must first put oneself in the position of the other and consider how one would

react in that situation. This philosophy of Buddhism is very convincingly presented in several places in Buddhist texts.

In a delightful conversation with King Pasenadi of Kosala, the Buddha confirms the statement of Queen Mallika [ S.1.75 ] that every individual person loves himself or herself more than any other [ *Natthi kho me mahārāja ko c 'ao attanā piyataro* ]. Therefore the inference is that the person who loves himself or herself should cause no harm to another [ *Tasmā na hiṃse paraṃ attakāmo* ]. The Buddhists push this inference almost to the level of an injunction. It is a solid norm by which every Buddhist is required to regulate his life.

In counselling the dwellers of Bamboo Gate, i.e. the Brahmin village of Veludvara [ S.V. 352 ], the Buddha uses this same yardstick of 'self - example' or *attūpanāyikaṃ dhammapariyāyaṃ*. Admonishing those dwellers of Bamboo Gate on the need of good moral order in society, of good words and good deeds in relation to one another in our human community, the Buddha insists that those who love their lives and opt to live and do not choose to die [ *jīvitukāmo amaritukāmo* ], should also respect the lives of others. The Buddha extends this consideration of treating the other with respect to many other segments of life like sexual propriety and regard for the property of others as well as honesty and politeness in speech and abstinence from slander. Thus we have to admit the Buddhist concept of *maitrī* safeguards not only the lives of all living things, but also safeguards the total process of living, together with life accompaniments like one's families, property and sources of pleasure.

This typically horizontal concept of love and respect for life whereby one holds oneself as a part of an integrated whole, without any secret pacts as chosen or privileged people, is the keynote of the Buddhist concept of *maitrī*. It admits of no vertical gradations with special loyalties to one's religion or one's race. That is why we are free to call it universal loving kindness. And such love implies no expectation of returns or rewards, with personal or group interests. *Maitrī* bolsters up the very living process in the world, of man and animal, without

any need to look for grace from elsewhere. This sort of love, without a Cupid's arrow piercing through it, is self-protective. It begets life and safeguards life. It is like a mother's love for her only child. The Metta Sutta aptly refers to it as *māti yathā niyaṃ puttāṃ āyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe*.

This theme that I put forward here, taking it over from the Buddhist concept of developing *maitrī* or universal loving kindness, so as to embrace the entire ecosystem in which we are, is something which has been gaining ground in the western world of scientific men. Here is a very highly spoken of scientific book, recently published in North America as late as 1993. Its title is **The Biophilia Hypothesis** and is edited by **Stephen R. Kellert** and **Edward O. Wilson**.

Scott McVay, in his prelude to this book, writes the following which gives a clear indication of the sensitivity in the world of scientific thinking to the losses we are daily incurring in our living world, primarily due to the lack of love and concern contained within the concept of *maitrī* referred to earlier and amplified in the Metta Sutta. The note of warning he strikes therein about the disaster the humans are bringing upon themselves through a callous disregard of this relationship is to be adequately and sensitively appreciated. Here is Scott McVay, quoting Edward Wilson.

The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us.

Then he proceeds to make his own observation:

Although oft cited and reported, the scale of the unfolding catastrophic loss of many and varied ecosystems through human activity is still only dimly perceived, for the link between the degradation of the biota and the diminishment of the human prospect is poorly understood.

McVay's severest warning which is not to be dismissed lightly comes in the

following. Yet until the biophilia hypothesis is more fully absorbed in the science and culture of our times -- and becomes a tenet animating our everyday lives -- the human prospect will wane as the rich biological exuberance of this water planet is quashed, impoverished, cut, polluted, and pillaged.

As we scan religious and philosophical thought in India during Buddha's time, we are in a position to acknowledge with pride that we share this honour of offering non-violence to the world with the Jains who boldly declared that it constitutes the highest religious virtue. ***Ahiṃsā paramo dharma*** was one of their cardinal teachings. The Buddhists have it as their first precept in the set formula of ***pacasīla***. Its semi-legalised phrasing as ***paṇītipīṭi veramanī*** or abstinence from destruction of life plays a dual role. It primarily safeguards the security of life of all living things. Secondly, it also inculcates the virtue of practicing, directly and positively, compassion and loving kindness towards all that exists along with us.

It is lamentable that both in the current teaching of Buddhism on the one hand, and its day-to-day practice on the other, sufficient stress is not being laid on this second aspect of the positive culture of benevolence. ***Mettā bhāvanā*** or practice of loving kindness has to be more than mere good wishes for the well-being of others. The specific instructions in the Buddhist texts about it run as follows. **One shall lay aside the instruments of torture and destruction, and shall be endowed with a sense of restraint and compassionate lovingness, and shall dwell with concern for the welfare of all living things** [ *Nihitadaṇḍo nihitasattho lajjī dayāpanno sabba-pāṇa-bhūta-hitānukampī viharat*. D.1. 63 ].

The cultivation of such a frame of mind for all that lives in this world of ours, as is inculcated in Buddhism, necessarily antedates the modern **biophilia hypothesis** of the scientific world which we discussed above, by more than twenty- five centuries. But with this vast span of time between the birth of Buddhism and our world of today, McVay has still to utter quite aloud and with energetic emphasis the following : **In particular, our understanding of human / animal interactions is still woefully scanty.**

At this stage, let me personally tell you that not being young any more at the age of seventy-four, I can discover a comforting ray of hope coming to this part of the world which would make us rethink on these lines. This time, it beams brighter from Australia. In Melbourne, a young Professor of Bioethics at Monash University, during a delightful get-together we had in his own office, presented to me three books of his own writing, in appreciation for a single volume I offered him. He writes extensively on Animal Liberation and is the president and vice-president of several Animal Societies of Australia and New Zealand. His classic is **Animal Liberation** which was first published in 1975 and republished in Great Britain in 1990.

Now listen, particularly the Sri Lankan Buddhists whose first precept of the *pacasila*, i.e. *Pāṇātipātā veramanī*, is the undertaking to abstain from destruction of life and to be kind and compassionate towards all living things. This is what the readers' world thinks of **Peter Singer's Animal Liberation**.

It was the first modern work to argue that those who oppose human suffering must oppose inflicting suffering on animals....Peter Singer showed that meat production is not only ethically indefensible but shamefully wasteful, depriving the world's poor of the protein they need.

His **Save The Animals / 101 Easy Things You Can Do** of 1990 and 1991, co-authored with **Barbara Dover** and **Ingrid Newkirk**, goes more or less as a companion to the former. **Linda McCartney** who writes the Foreword to this excitingly interesting book says:

A long time ago we realized that anyone who cares about the Earth -- really cares -- must stop eating animals. The more we read about deforestation, water pollution, and topsoil erosion, the stronger that realization becomes.

Expressing her love and concern for animals from yet another angle, this lady goes on to say:

Of course, anyone who cares about *animals* must stop eating animals. Just the thought of what happens in a slaughterhouse is enough. We stopped eating meat the day we happened to look out our window during Sunday lunch and saw our young lambs playing happily, as kittens do, in the fields. Eating bits of them suddenly made no sense. In fact, it was revolting.

They are all members of Animal Liberation movements in Australia and the United States. They seem to speak with a depth of conviction and genuineness of feeling. From our part of the world, it is time we learnt to appreciate that the beneficiaries of such thinking and action are the voiceless victims of the animal world. And for that very reason, the undefended and unprotected.

In the face of all that has been said from various angles of love, compassion and logical thinking as expressions of respect for life, we believe it is time that Sri Lankans took a few bold steps forward in the direction of Animal Liberation, Vegetarianism and Biophilia Hypothesis. The failure to move quickly in this direction could result in a negation for man of the right to continue to exist on this planet.

Venerable Professor Dhammavihari  
Siri Vajiranana Dharmayatanaya  
Maharagama

## (10) To Earn and to Spend

Doing it the Buddhist way

According to Buddhism, happiness of man or ***sukha*** is derived from four major areas. They are happiness resulting from the following.

1. ***atthi-sukha*** or possession of wealth or means of living, i.e. money and material.

2. ***bhoga-sukha*** or meaningful utilisation of such means in one's own life.
3. ***anāṇa-sukha*** or not being indebted in the process of making a living.
4. ***anavajja-sukha*** which assures that one is completely blameless throughout the entire process of making a living.

Here we take up for discussion in greater detail the first item which contributes to the happiness of man. It is the ***atthi-sukha*** or the possession of means whereby one is assured of comfortable living. It also enables one not to suffer from want with regard to food, clothing and shelter and whatever else that contributes to happiness. Within this come the materials of day to day need as well as the money with which one acquires them. This foundation of one's economic life is referred to in Buddhist texts as ***bhoga*** or wealth. It is exhaustively dealt with in the Buddhist texts, viewing it from diverse angles of production, distribution, consumption and conservation etc.

Starting with the problem of production, Buddhist teachings lay great emphasis on the utilization of man-power resources. Energetic application to work is a *sine qua non* of the economic development of the individual as well as of the community. This is why the well known Sigāla Sutta of the Buddhists says that the man of the world, who minds not the heat and the cold of the weather any more than a blade of grass, slips not off from his pedestal of happiness.

*Yo ca sītañ ca uṇhañ ca tiṇā bhiyyo na maññati  
karaṃ purisa-kiccāni so sukhā na vihāyatī. DN. III. 185*

***Dhana*** or wealth is approvingly referred to as being ***uṭṭhānādhigata*** or acquired through diligent application to work. Note the highly commended total disregard to inclement weather referred to above. The use of one's sinewy hands, like those of the village blacksmith referred to in the English poem under that name, makes the money acquired thereby [ ***bāhābala-paricita*** ] defensible in terms of any social philosophy or political ideology as well-earned justifiable

assets [ *dharmika-dhamma-laddha-bhoga* ].

In Buddhist thinking, legitimacy of private ownership of property is upheld only where neither state law could prosecute nor public opinion find room for censure with regard to the mode of acquisition [ *yathākāmakāritaṃ āpajjanto adaṇḍāraho anupavajjo hoti*. DA.1.71 & KhpA.26 ]. The money so earned with the strength of one's hands, literally referred to in Pali as *bāhābala-paricita* [already noted above ] , is a worker's legitimate right. Every one of us, in the society in which we live, must invariably be such honest workers, each one toiling for his food and clothing with such unquestionable honesty. Another powerful idea which accompanies this is 'sweat and toil', comprehended under the Pali term *sedāvakkhitta*, a process of living closely tied up with the sweat of one's brow.

While these considerations establish the dignity of labour so necessary for a dynamic and healthy society which is to witness a steady economic development, society must also necessarily reduce its idle and lazy hands to a much stigmatized position. Fortunes bypass such indolent people, says the Sigāla Sutta which we have already quoted above [ *Iti-vissaṭṭha-kammante atthā accenti māṇave*. DN. III.185 ]. At the same time, it is of great significance to observe that the culture reflected in early Buddhist society also laid stress on skilled labour and technical perfection. In industry and technology, a master craftsman was referred to as being *dakkha* [ Skt. *dakṣa* ] or skillful and clever. One hears of him putting his apprentices or *antevāsī* through rigid and regular courses of training. Very high standards of technical skill was insisted on. The result was the production of high quality goods which had a very high market value and a competitive trading leadership. There is no doubt that these ancient people had an awareness of the economic advantages of pursuing such an industrial policy. Silks of Benares and sandal-wood products of the same region [ *kāsikaṃ candanaṃ* ] ranked foremost among such articles.

In agriculture too, for the purpose of obtaining maximum results in relation to



the time and labour expended, there is evidence to believe that they relied on a great deal of technical know-how. Insistence on higher quality seed [*bījāni akkhaṇḍāni apūtīni avātātapahatāni sārādāni sukha-sayitāni*. AN.1. 135 ] and selection and preparation of the right kind of soil [ *sukhetṭe suparikamma-katāya bhūmiyā*. Ibid. ] are all too well known in Buddhist texts. All this planning was undoubtedly undertaken in the belief that one could, through efficient planning, eliminate waste of material and man-power while achieving the goal of maximum yield.

Over and above all this, there seems to loom large on the productive side of the economy, another vital consideration. That is the insistence on justice and fair play in the process of increasing one's wealth or enhancing one's economic position, individually or collectively, as a single citizen or as a nation. Herein lies the insistence on *dharmā*. Economic prosperity must necessarily be based on *dharmā* , i.e. sound value judgements or just and fair means of achieving it. This is the eternal theme of Buddhism. It is nothing new to the Buddhist world. It should never be otherwise.

*Bhoga* which implies wealth or means of livelihood must be rightly acquired [*dhammika* and *dhamma-laddha* AN.III. 45 ]. The adoption of both destructive and deceitful means in this process, as for instance those which directly assail the five basic socio-religious virtues of *Pacasīla*, is denounced. This is also what is implied in *sammā-kammanta* or justifiable modes of action and *sammā-ājīva* or justifiable forms of livelihood as stages in the Noble Eight fold Path.

Thus in the process of obtaining a means of livelihood for one's self , and stabilizing one's economic position , one should also keep in mind not to damage and disrupt the harmony around as does happen in the breach of the *pañca-sīla*. For if one did, it is sure to have its repercussions on the doer himself, sooner or later. And to regain, for everybody's sake, the lost balance would be no easy task. A polluted environment, and depletion of unreplenishable natural resources are some instances of paying for the sins of unjust living. Wars and ravages of

war, closely associated with under-world sale of fire-arms, go without saying.

On the other hand, *bhoga* or wealth justifiably acquired within the perimeter of *dharma*, is nothing to frown upon. Nor is it anything to run away from or feel ashamed of. Thus reasonable social considerations, reinforced with the religious values we have just discussed, should be equal to the task of safeguarding this position.

Social disturbances resulting from economic imbalances seem to emerge at the level of use of wealth. We have already pointed out the need to be energetic at the point of economic productivity. There is no denying that a world of material complexity as is emerging today, opens out many new needs for money, ending up in many danger zones like consumerism and perilous social escalation. This is seen to be rapidly on the increase with the conquest of time and space through diverse modes of media, and the evident breakdown of cultural demarcations. The desirability or otherwise of this latter phenomenon of universalization of culture patterns or life styles is a much debated theme today. At any rate, it seems too obvious that provincial variations have to be reckoned with. Any attempt at global equalization of life patterns, in food, housing, dress etc. seems almost insane, if not fascist in approach.

What then becomes clear from this is that the economic levels achieved through honest and diligent activity and the emerging life patterns which draw on these economic resources have to be sensibly related. This is a vital consideration both at domestic and national levels. It is at this stage that one has to face the grim realities of such economic concepts like protectionism, post-industrial society etc. These make us realize the diversity, more than the imagined homogeneity that exists in different parts of the world.

Buddhist texts, in their own apparent provincial way, prescribe in detail regarding the careful spending, diligent saving and fruitful investing of the money earned with effort and enterprise. A major principle in what might be described as

a Buddhist economic system is the attempt to recognize as adequate the economic resources at one's disposal and plan accordingly to make the best use of them. This is **santutṭhi** or contentment and that is obviously why it is said to be the greatest wealth a man could come to possess [ **santutṭhi-paramaṃ dhanam** ]. Contentment is the economic stabilizer *par excellence* in the life of an individual.

Another significant feature of a Buddhist system of economics is the attempt to arrest the wasteful draining away of one's well-earned income, very forcefully referred to in Buddhist texts as **apāya-mukhāni** [ or drain-away outlets ] over which one is expected to keep a watchful eye. The Sigāla Sutta refers to six such drain-away outlets [ **cha bhogānaṃ apāya-mukhāni** DN.III. 182 ]. Extravagance, indiscretion and lack of stable values are among the many causes that lead to it. Modest budgeting, without being lured by unrealistic external attractions on the one hand, and being adequately justified by internal realities on the other, would be deemed a key factor in economic stability. This is where Buddhist values of moderation and simplicity would be most productive. On the other hand, it is the failure to withstand the challenges of **māna**, i.e. of pride and conceit or in other words of competitive comparisons to establish superiority and supremacy of one individual over another individual or of one group over another group which escalates unhealthy social competition in the outward modes of living and lead to economic crises.

Having thus regulated the production of wealth and the pattern of expenditure, one should also give thought to saving and investing as a means of stabilising one's economy. This, on the one hand, serves as a stand-by in times of distress. On the other, it contributes to the expansion of the basis of one's economy.

All this done, one's basis of happiness in **atthi-sukha**, of being one who has, as against have-nots, should be adequately secure. A few observations should now also be added with regard to the use of wealth, i.e. **bhoga-sukha** as a means to happiness. Buddhist texts take note of a wide range of social commitments

which a man in society has to face and accept [See AN.III. 45]. Man owes a number of obligations to those around him in the society in which he has been brought up and lives. Benefits from the spending of one's wealth should accrue to all these diverse groups.

As a reward for the hard work one puts in for the acquisition of wealth, a man must provide for his own comfort and happiness: *attānaṃ sukheti pīṇeti*. First of all, among his beneficiaries, there should be his parents to look after and provide for [they being his first and foremost relations in this world.]. If he is married, he has his wife and children as well as those who work for him in his house-hold. There are also his friends and relatives who should possibly benefit from his wealth. This entire gamut of relationships, we could meaningfully classify as familial, extra-familial and inter-familial. The ability to make provision for all these, in turn, would be a source of happiness to the man who chooses to do so. This brings the Buddhist to another grand social ethic called '**delighting in gifting and sharing one's assets with others**': *dāna-saṃvibhāga-rato* [AN.I. 150].

Thus the proper use of his wealth [ *bhoga-sukha* ] is another basis of stable happiness for the man of the world. In talking of the uses [ *bhogānaṃ ādiyā* ] to which a righteous man would put the money he has earned with the sweat of his brow, the Buddhist texts also envisage areas which are of public utility. State dues and charitable institutions are not lost sight of [ See AN.III. 45 for further details.].

From what we have said so far it becomes clear that a Buddhist economic system is basically interested in stabilizing the economy both of the individual and of the state with a view to giving maximum happiness without bringing into conflict those around, near or far and without damaging the moral fabric of the society at large. Live and let live is one of its major themes. According to Buddhism, those who manipulate the state organizational structure should be far from being interested in wielding power. Correct employment is the successful utilization of manpower and human skill at the place where it is needed and

where it would yield maximum result.

From a Buddhist point of view the presence of non-working, and therefore of non-productive men in society is a pathological condition. As is being envisaged in the post-industrial society of the world today, to do the work yourself in certain areas and not have to pay for it is to earn half your income thereby. Then you need to go out seeking employment to earn only half your total money required. This will soon have to be necessarily so on account of the shrinking employment possibilities of the world of today and tomorrow. Work, employment and earning concepts inculcated in Buddhism would thus suitably qualify many a man for the new economic order of the world that is emerging.

International Buddhist Research and Information Center  
380/9 Sarana Road, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka

## **(11) Conquest With or Without Conflict**

The writer Bhikku Dhammavihari [Prof. Jotiya Dhirasekera] took to the life of a Buddhist monk at the age of sixty-nine on May 18, 1990.

At the time of his retirement he was the Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya. His last University teaching assignment was as the Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Toronto.

**A** close scrutiny of world history, particularly an analysis of events of the second half of this century, instils in us a legitimate sense of dread and horror as we move in to the territory of conquest. Throughout history, the sting of conquest has been venomous. In this sense of conquest there are many other associated English words like overthrow, defeat, vanquish, subjugate etc. It also means to eliminate, to take away the right of existence and to destroy identity. At least the

process of conquest is seen to end up with these results. Closely tied up with this process of thought and action are aggression and destruction. It also moves in the direction of acquisition and appropriation which are invariable results of the conquest motive. The most manifest aspect of this in history has been territorial conquest, expressed under various guises as territorial expansion., political aggrandisement and invasion, the obvious motivation being the need for more land for one group of people as against another, for the exploitation of the valuable resources there of, more people by way of converts to one's political or religious creeds and more agricultural and industrial produce for the sustenance of the conquering people and above all the resulting economic gains which rank high in today's political vision.

But this mode of crushing another country and its people physically under the heel of power, whether it be political, religious or military, leaves behind tell-tale gaping wounds which take shorter or longer periods of time to heal. War-torn Europe after the World War II in the West and the epitome of tragedy in Hiroshima in the east are, to those who saw them physically themselves, very clear examples. Since then many other regions of the world have been invaded, subjugated and overrun likewise, leaving behind trails of blood-shed and massacre, economic disaster and socio-cultural denudation, even up to a total geophysical devastation as in the case of the war in Vietnam. This kind of move to rout swings round the two basic principles of the desire to acquire, own and possess and the other equally vicious desire to eliminate or exterminate: the instinctive moves of likes or dislikes or attraction and repulsion. Spoken in terms of a religious idiom, as is known to Buddhism, they are greed and hatred. Greed is what over-rides needs, a position which human society with any degree of sanity could not concede. To concede it would be to make room for social maladies like imbalances, poverty and haves and have-nots. Hatred or ill-will, by whatever name you call it, is the inability of man to love and tolerate another. Self-righteousness and egoism or an over-inflated notion of selfhood of I and mine is the only perch from which one could attempt to defend any move in this

direction.

This form of self-expansion and self-extension at the expense of others, whether it be by individuals or by more organized collective groups, merely out of material bread and butter interests, would be reckoned as being at savage level. Primitive man at the rudimentary stages of human development, at the stage of food-gatherers, without an awareness of the possibilities of cultivation and production, had no alternative other than grabbing the stores of those nearby. These are true records of human history, not to be ashamed of when it happened then. Here is a beautiful report of such an incident extracted from an early Buddhist text:

At an early stage in the history of man when food-gatherers, regardless of their daily needs, tended to hoard grain, thus creating inevitable imbalances and maldistribution, the wiser ones then are said to have thought out a solution in equitably dividing the grain [sālim vibhajeyyāma] and fixing a limit on possession [mariyādaṃ ṭhapeyyāma] [Both these statements are incorrectly translated at Dialogues of the Buddha III p.37.

A more recent translation of the same in Thus Have I Heard by Maurice Walshe, published in 1987, sixty-six years later after the former, blunders on the same, making the mistakes even worse]. Even this arrangement was disrupted by a greedy man who, safe-guarding his own allocation, stole another's portion for his consumption [incorrectly translated again]. The others seized him, chastised him and beat him up. [The original Pali text of this occurs in the Aggañña Sutta at Dīgha Nikāya [DN. III p.92 PTS].

But it is totally shameless and despicable when such things are being done stealthily in the world today, in a world believed to be more civilized than that of our ancestors. Ingeniously thought out theories and explanations may be advanced in justification of these malpractices which are no less than crimes committed by man against man. This manner of plunder and misappropriation

continues to be indulged in all the world over, within nations and at international levels. They evade detection, no doubt, and the world is sadder and poorer thereby.

Believed to be apparently less censurable and imagined therefore to be less savage-like and more in the interests of humanity are the more elaborately and surreptitiously worked out ideological and religious conquests. From a vantage point of self-righteousness that truth, goodness and what is wholesome to mankind is only what any specific group can offer and none other, self-interest, and this time not of an individual but of a branded community, charged with a self-infused sense of mission, roars and rolls down the less guarded slopes of weaker human communities who generally are in the categories socially harassed and economically ravaged. These thrusts assume the role of rescue operations, often carried out under the blinding glare of high powered beams of social and economic redress. In the end these operations leave more dead than alive and the survivors soon realise that they are bereft of everything hitherto cherished except the nominal submission to a new and strange world of imposed beliefs. Such ships of salvation which sail on the high seas of vanity are undeniably doomed to destruction, at least as far as peace of man on earth is concerned. The pedagogical arrogance of such ideological movements destroys their very instruments of direction. Hence within some of these massive movements, both religious and political one notices from time to time revisionist uprisings and even violent gusty winds of reform.

At a time like this when ideological, religious and ethnic crises have arisen in many parts of the world, particularly in areas where philosophical maturity, for whatever reason, is at a low ebb, and humanitarian considerations have virtually evaporated, threatening a process of dehumanization and desertification, there is much meaning in one's returning to one's native genius: to a pattern of thinking and a system of values which have grown out of one's own soil which would certainly be comparable to herbal therapy as against a drug cure, with less side



effects and less liable to be toxic.

The late Dr. Raphaelo M. Salas, one time United Nations Expert on population, in a Convocation Address of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, delivered in 1979 referred to the Buddha as a wise old master who lived in India over 2500 years ago and quoting the verse No. 336 of the Dhammapada said that those words of the Buddha should be Sri Lanka's contribution to the world for the 21st century.

"Who so in the world overcomes this base unruly craving, from him sorrows fall away like water drops from a lotus leaf."

Today, more that a decade later, we need to appreciate the wisdom of what he said and realise the necessity to delve deeper into the teachings of that wise old master. To quote the Dhammapada once more, it is said in verse no.80 that self- conquest is the role the wise: *attānaṃ damayanti paṇḍitā*. This is the conquest supreme: the conquest without conflict, wherein all conflicts are resolved.

Singling out the concept of state- craft for special study at this stage let it be revealed that in the world of Buddhist thinking there is a wealth of challenging wisdom which pertains to this area. Woven around the semi-legendary idea of the Universal Monarch or Cakkavatti, the finest advice given to kings or statesmen comes in this form: "When political leadership, personal or doctrinaire, reaches a stage of stagnation and collapse wiser counsel should prevail." With the collapse of power of the Universal Monarch he is asked to reorganize himself and re- establish himself in the tenfold Ariyan duties of a Cakkavatti. The last of these calls upon the Cakkavatti to go up to the virtuous and exemplary men of religious life [samaṇas and brāhmaṇas] in his kingdom and inquire from them as to what is good conduct conducive to weal and welfare and adjust himself accordingly, avoiding evil and doing what is good. When these duties are well accomplished we are told that kingship would be restored. This, it must be most

emphatically stated, is the healthiest and most wholesome grafting of state and religion.

It is lamentably tragic that the English translations of the section of the sutta where these ideas occur [done in 1921] completely reverse the position. The religious men are presented as coming to the monarch and questioning him concerning what is good and what is bad, and hearing what they say he is asked to deter them from evil and bid them take up what is good. This is a fantastic entrusting to the state the right to correct religious men [See Dialogues of the Buddha Vol.III. p.62 and Maurice Walshe: Thus Have I Heard, p.397].

We wish to bring this study of the concept of conquest to a close by finally indicating the manner in which the Universal Monarch in the Buddhist world of thinking reacts when he finds himself the supreme ruler over the four regions of the earth, with the former kings who ruled independently before him acknowledging his suzerainty and wishing to be instructed by him. He shows no interest in accepting political authority over those newly gained territories. He concedes to them their right to rule over them as they did before, with no thoughts whatever of political restructuring, perhaps both ideologically and administratively. His only concern and interest is the assurance through the length and breadth of the universe of a perfect moral order where the five basic precepts of Buddhism, the pañcasīla, which could be shared and upheld by any set of decent people anywhere in the world without any offence to any one, shall be observed without a breach.

"You shall slay no living thing. You shall not deprive others of their rightful possessions. Propriety of sex relations of males and females in society, married or unmarried, shall not be violated. Honesty shall be observed. You shall consume no intoxicants. You shall govern as you have done before." [I have given here as faithful and accurate a translation of the text as possible. See Dialogues of the Buddha Vol.II. p. 203 and Vol. III. pp. 63-64 as well as Maurice Walshe: Thus Have I Heard, pp.281 and 398 for some what partially misdirected

translations. We are sorry that in many instances social scientists, sociologists and anthropologists and over-enthusiastic political leaders who in many instances have been misled by these erroneous translations.]

In these circumstances, even the groups who seek to be governed by a righteous monarch are told that it is not their political machinery that needs restructuring, but their moral super-structure. As long as man is treated with respect as man and as long as fundamental human rights of safety of person and safety of property are safeguarded Buddhism appears to see no blasphemy in legitimately set up political structures. This is the fundamental principle embodied in this sutta which has an over two thousand years old history: that social justice and human rights shall gain precedence over political ideologies.

This philosophy of conquest without conflict which is basically a product of self-conquest as enunciated in verse No.80 of the Dhammapada is what one has to bear in life. This is the position where I have now come to stay.

## **(12) Five Planes of After - Death Existence**

### **OR PAÑCA GATAYO**

A Buddhist study with special reference to human degeneracy and return to normality

To the Buddhist, the idea of planes of existence is basic to his religious beliefs, or is one primarily derived from those beliefs. It would be correct to say at the very outset that one would cease to be a Buddhist if one did not subscribe to the idea of **Samsāra**, or the ceaseless chain of existences. It is a part of the reality of life of which the Buddha makes a very clear indication in his pre-enlightenment first observations about the nature of life on earth. These remarks

by the bodhisatta, contained in the Buddha Vagga of the Samyutta Nikāya, are very vital and no Buddhist could afford to miss them. There is a very definite statement here about the nature of the present life, its termination at death and a reappearance of it in a new life: *jāyati jīyati* and *mīyati* of this life, *cavati* at the end of it and *uppajjati* once again, restarting the entire process. And every Buddhist should also know that the stage on which this entire drama is enacted, time and again, is known as *bhava* or the process of becoming. And this is structured on the very process of living which involves grasping at life to a greater or lesser degree. This we call *upādāna*. When we as human beings, composed of the fivefold aggregates or the *pañcakkhandha* are in active communication with the world around us, we build a parallel set of five psychical aggregates which are called *upādānakkhandha*. Now let me tell you that when we accurately describe Nibbāna, we describe it as *anupādā parinibbāna* or *nibbāna* without any grasping or nibbāna through non-grasping.

Until we reach this stage, we humans are caught up in the process of continuous becoming or *bhava*. Viewing it from another angle we call it *samsāra* or sojourning. Each one of us inherits a vast segment of this which extends through time and space.

It is at this point that we have to be rightly conscious or aware of planes of existence. In the infinite forward stretch through time humans can be born in several states, above and below the central human plane. The Buddhist texts refer to them as *pañca gatayo* or journeying on wards from the human plane. Of these, the two acceptable or reward planes are *manussa* and *deva*. On account of their acceptability they are called *sugati*. Those that are a decline or degradation from the human are referred to by the name of *duggati*. They are also on account of their corrosive nature called *niraya*, *duggati* and *vinipāta*. These are the hells, animal existence and *peta* worlds. The moral or religious life of the Buddhist is closely tied up with these. They are linked up with one's life in the human existence. One gets there in consequence of the life lived as human

beings.

Man as against animal is gifted with the power to reason and judge. Failure to exercise this power as humans results in the commission of deeds which corrode the very human nature of man. This is the process of getting tarnished or acquiring *kilesa*, i.e. *kilissati* as when we say *attanā'va katam pāpam attanā saṃkilissati*. This gets one deeper and deeper in **samsāra** and further and further from the goal of **nibbāna** or release from **samsāra**. In other words, this is the process of committing evil or **akusala kamma** through greed, hatred and delusion. Into this line of thinking there is built in a process of self-correction where by evil effects of **karma** are worn out by an expiatory process of suffering or **vipāka paṭisaṃvedana**. This self-purge through suffering can be effected in this very life as a human, in the next life or any other, either as a human or as a suffering being in any of the **duggati**. Thus we see that suffering the consequences of evil **kamma** for expiatory purposes extends through time and space, **diṭṭhadhammavedanīya**, **upapajjavedanīya** and **aparāpariyavedanīya**, dealing with them time wise and **nirayavedanīya**, **tiracchānavedanīya** etc. dealing with **karma** space wise. This is where the Buddhists are called upon to reckon with difficult and different planes. The conduct of man necessitates his getting into any one of these states to effect the necessary purge. Once this is satisfactorily concluded, then a being returns to the human plane: *so hi nūna ito gantvā yoniṃ laddhāna mānusiṃ*. This is a recurrent refrain heard both from the **nirayas** and the **preta** worlds. This is the logical and theoretical structuring of the higher and lower planes of existence in relation to man.

In the light of the above remarks it would be logical to argue that both the journeying to and the return from these states of existence is self-propelled. Get there or be sent there for the specific purpose of purging oneself of the corrosive stains of evil **kamma** committed while being in this highly privileged position of a human being and on the completion of it come back to the human plane once again to continue the struggle for redemption from the ills of **samsāric** existence.

At this stage we are compelled to observe that the planes of existence, good or bad, in which a human being can get born after death are really of one's own seeking. It is essentially a personal responsibility. Human nature being what it is, a *samsāric* creature plunges into various forms of existence, high and low. Gotama Thera explains this clearly in the Theragāthā when he says: ***Samsaram hi nirayam agacchisam.*** In my *samsāric* sojourning I did find my way to the hells. ***Petalokam agamam punappunam.*** Time and again I was in the world of the Petas. ***Dukkhamamhi 'pi tiracchānayaniyā' nekadhā hi vusitam ciram mayā.*** Even through the most painful existence of the animal world, I have been many a time. Mediation by others, if ever possible in any form, remains minimal. In the light of this, the claim to liberate persons from the state of *petas*, and that within a period of seven days after death, should make very little sense to the Buddhist. For it is repeatedly stated in the Buddhist texts that persons suffering in these states of *duggati*, even in the midst of most severe torture, do not die while their evil deeds have not been paid off : ***na ca tāva kālam karonti yāva tam pāpam kammaṃ na vyanti hoti. Vyanti karaṇa*** or paying off for the evil deeds done is a very vital point of Buddhist doctrine and no Buddhist who seriously considers the question of salvation can afford to treat it lightly.

Let us now turn our attention to the two satisfactory planes, namely *deva* and *manussa*, the heavenly and the human. We have already indicated that the human is our main central theme and the major area of operation.

Religiously speaking, the lower states of *niraya* and *apāya* are non-operational. The dynamics of change and reform are possible only at the level of humans. The heavenly plane is very static in structure, with little room for personal option and endeavour. Since this plane of *devas* is labelled as a reward state for the good deeds done while in the human plane, it has necessarily to reflect a life pattern which must appear superior to the human. The very basic nature of human life which prompts the search for *nibbāna* lists birth, decay, disease and death as inevitable and unavoidable. The unsatisfactoriness of

*samsāra* or *dukkha* is because of these failings. These are glossed over in the heavenly worlds and the *devas* are made to appear as though they are not subject to these. As far as the *devas* are concerned, the sting in the primary processes of life, namely birth and death is taken off. The *devas* arrive in the heavenly world in full-grown stature and not as babies in their mother's lap. Thus the pain of birth or *jāti pi dukkhā* is obliterated. Likewise in heaven, death is averted as it were, for no *devas* are seen in their death bed. Death of the *devas* is total disappearance from the realm i.e. *cavana* and not *maraṇa*. No dead bodies, burials or undertakers.

However, at the end of this phase of glazed living, what happens to these beings in this escapist world? They swing, or are virtually hurled back, to the world of the humans where they have to start it all over again. For they acquire no skills while in the deva world. They are more pleasure enjoying realms or *kāmāvacara* where humans revel excessively and eat into the savings made while in the human plane. Their minds move not in the direction of spiritual development. They subscribe liberally to *samsāric* prolongation. They undertake no *sikkhā* or training nor practice *sīla* or *samādhi* as a way to *nibbāna*. As *therī* Sumedhā of the *Therīgāthā* says they who rejoicing in *samsāric* sojourning - *abhinandanti bhavagatam*- expect to be born among the gods- *pihanti devesu upapattim*- they know not the truths enunciated by the Buddha. In the verses of *Therī Sisopacālā* it is put even more poignantly. One is called upon to recollect the existences among the gods: *Tāvatisa, Yāma, Tusita* and others and take note of the fact that these gods, because of their inflated selfhood-*sakkāyasmim purakkhatā*- they continue to roll on in *samsāra*- *avītivattā sakkāyam jātimaranasārino*.

Thus it appears that birth in the heavenly planes, when viewed from a conservative early Buddhist position, is not held in high esteem relative to the true goal of *nibbāna*. At the same time, a moral life rich in socio-ethical goodness, seems to offer among other things, birth in the happy state of heaven:

sugatim saggam lokam. While the life style of the devas was being presented in Buddhist texts in this style, perhaps partly under the influence of contemporary Indian religious thought, the response and reaction to it in real Buddhist thinking appears to have been somewhat missed. It is said that the Buddha once asked his disciples how they would react if they were asked whether they lived the life of a monk under him for the sake of being born in the heavenly world. In fact, the Buddha puts it into their mouth whether they would not be ashamed of such a position, and would not recoil from it. And the monks, in turn, affirm the Buddha's assessment in one voice. In the Cetokhila Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya it is said that to live the life of a monk, aspiring to be born in the heavenly world, would be spiritually retarding. In the Samyutta nikāya, the Buddhist disciple who was quite unexpectedly born in the heavenly world while in the act of meditating, wishes to be shown the way back to the human world, saying that the heavenly world is a maddening abode: *vanam tam mohanam nāma katham yātrā bhavissati*.

On the other hand, birth in heaven is no mean attraction. It is keenly competitive, too competitive in fact as to generate in ordinary worldlings pathological states of mind. Feelings of outdoing the other, excelling those around are some such feelings from which it is said that some types of devās suffer at times. A typical example of this is the *manopadosikā devā* who merely on being irritated at the grandeur of their neighbours would suffer death.

Thus it becomes clear that the heavenly worlds, when compared with the human plane, are places which lead to a distortion and confusion of real Buddhist values. This is why the Samana devaputta described the heavens as *vanam tam mohanam nāma*. If the heavenly worlds are the reward for good living, then good living itself yields dividends which help worldlings to reach their desired goal of release from *samsāra*. Such aspirants to *nibbāna* would have little need or desire to speculate on or aspire to be born as devas. Humans, on account of the sublimity of their minds, are nearer *nibbāna* than all others. Life with the devas ties one down to *samsāra*. Little wonder then that the Buddha's good disciples



recoiled from such a position and were ashamed at the very thought of it.

Our summing up now is briefly as follows. Beings in this world of ours, including those both above and bellow the human plane, are products of their own creation. Since man's activity covers the entire gamut of good and bad, his passage from this life to the next can take two directions, one of ascent or descent. Life-generative volitional activity (sañcetanika kamma) being more or less the prerogative of man, the launching pad therefore for journeying in either direction is undeniably the human plane. Correction as much as corruption takes place at this level of human existence. The lesson therefore one has to learn from this is that every moment of one's life as a human being must be put to the maximum use for self correction and self improvement. Those who fail to do so and let moments pass by, i.e. lose their opportunities, have to grieve on that account once they are plunged in misery: *khanatītā hi socanti nirayamhi samappitā*.

Ven.Profesor Dhammavīhāri.

Siri Vajirañāna Dharmāyatanaya Maharagama

Sri Lanka

## THANK YOU

We believe you have been through at least some of these programs. We also expect you made your own selection. That certainly is your right. Did you sit long enough, and tell us, with what measure of patience and application?

We would be glad if we did at least provoke you. Please tell us your reactions. As Buddhist thinkers we are fundamentalist to the extent that we believe Buddhism as a religion or philosophy, a way of living or whatever it be, in its modern expression, should be as near to and consistent with what Buddha Gotama as the Enlightened One propounded more than twenty-five centuries ago.

His wisdom was deep and penetrating enough to give to the world a spiritual message which would be relevant and equally meaningful to mankind as a whole, even with the lapse of centuries. It was a down-to-earth human message to humanity. Man shall utilize it for the benefit of man, without invoking foreign aid. His Dhamma is called *sanĀtana* or eternal because it rides well above time space considerations.

Convene more regular meetings of your Home Assemblies, preferably with the lady of the house as the chair person, and in the company of the tween-agers + teen-agers of your home, discuss some of the issues we raise. Make these computer-viewing group gatherings a first step in the direction of taste-enrichment in the home, of what to see, what to hear and what to read. We wish you good luck.

The International Buddhist Research and Information Center might place a more exciting disk in your hands in the near future. Please keep in touch with us.

## THE END

---

<sup>i</sup> *Yattha paro yathākāmakāritam āpajjanto adaṇḍāraho anupavajjo hoti. Khp A. 26 = Where, in claiming proprietary rights over property, one should not be liable to be prosecuted or punished under the laws of the land, or should not come under the censure or reproach [of the wise].*

<sup>ii</sup> *Tesaṃ no bhavaṃ Gotamo amhakam evamkāmaṇam evamchandānam evamadhippāyānaṃ tatha dhammaṃ desetu yathā mayaṃ putta-sambāddhasayanam ajjhāvaseyyāma kāsikachandanam paccanubhaveyyāma mālāgandha-vilepanaṃ dhāreyyāma jātārūparajataṃ sādīyeyyāma kāyassa bhedaṃ parammaraṇā sugatiṃ saggāṃ lokam upapajjeyyāma ' ti. SN.V.*

353 = To us who have such desires, expectations and aspirations, let Venerable Gotama preach a doctrine whereby we who have all the worries of bringing up children, and live a high quality life of luxury, and handle a lot of gold and silver, i.e. a lot of wealth, may reach the heavenly worlds after death.

<sup>iii</sup> *Ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti akkhaṇḍehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujiṣsehi viññūpsatthehi apamaṭṭhehi samādhī-samvattanikehi. Ibid. = He is endowed with the good moral qualities which are dear to the worthy ones (ariya) which are unbroken, undamaged,*

---

unblemished and untarnished, which are unfettered, praised by the wise and not bound by ritualistic routine and which definitely lead to tranquility of mind.].

<sup>iv</sup> *Abhikkantam bho Gotama ... ete mayam bhavantam Gotamam saram gacchāma dhammañ ca bhikkhusanghañ ca. Upāsake no bhavam Gotamo dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupete saram gate ' ti.* Ibid. = O Venerable Gotama, you have performed excellently well. We take refuge in you , O Lord, in your teaching and in the congregation of your good disciples. May Venerable Gotama accept us from today onwards as disciples who have taken refuge in ou for the rest of our life.